

CONCEPTUALISING RESISTANCE TO SERVICE CUT-OFFS AND HOUSEHOLD EVICTIONS – THE MANDELA PARK ANTI-EVICTION CAMPAIGN

by

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Administration at the University of Stellenbosch

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March 2008

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

The economic policy of the South African government referred to as the Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) has had a crippling impact on millions of poor and low-income families in South Africa since its adoption in 1996. The benefits to the minority have not compensated for the increased inequality, uncertainty and poverty that others have experienced (McDonald & Pape, 2002:24).

South Africa became the first African state to develop and implement a structural adjustment programme by voluntarily seeking the assistance of the World Bank and the IMF (Bond, 2000a:35). The government's own statistics reveal that unemployment, which was already high, reached catastrophic levels since 1996 and the poor became significantly poorer (Beuchler, 2002:04). Together with their community leadership, poor people increasingly managed to articulate the link between the increased poverty and hardships they experience and the state's macro-economic policies.

More than a decade into democracy, Mandela Park finds itself under armed assault by the State. Several community members have sacrificed their lives while fighting revolutionary struggles to ensure access to basic services and to remain in the places apartheid confined them. None of them ever thought that the hopes and dreams they harboured while fighting for democracy would be so brutally suppressed by the very government for which they sacrificed their lives.

Community organizations such as the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign (MPAEC) make significant contributions to community empowerment by mobilizing and articulating the voices of the poor and the vulnerable groups in the society to resist the State's hegemony with regards to service cut-offs and household evictions.

OPSOMMING

Die ekonomiese beleid van die Suid Afrikaanse regering wat bekend staan as GEAR het 'n kreupelende uitwerking op miljoene arme en lae-inkomste gesinne in Suid Afrika gehad veral sedert die program in 1996 deur die regering aanvaar is. Die voordele aan 'n enkele minderheid het nie vergoed vir die toenemende ongelykhede, onsekerhede en armoede wat andere ondervind het nie (McDonald & Pape, 2002:24).

Suid Afrika het die eerste Afrika staat geword om 'n strukturele aanpassingsprogram te ontwikkel en te implementeer deur vrywilliglik die hulp van die Wêreld Bank en die Internasionale Monetêre Fonds te soek (Bond, 2000a:35).

Soos die regering se eie statistieke aandui, het werkloosheid wat alreeds hoog is, katastrofiese vlakke bereik terwyl die land se armes merkwaardig armer geword het (Beuchler, 2002:04). Arm mense het tesame met hul gemeenskapleiers toenemend daarin geslaag om die verband tussen hul groeiende armoede en swaakhede, en die regering se makro-ekonomiese beleid te identifiseer.

Nou, na meer as 'n dekade in demokrasie, bevind Mandela Park inwoners hulself onder gewapende aanval deur die staat. Gemeenskapslede het revolusionêre gevegte gestry en hul lewens op die spel geplaas om toegang tot basiese dienste te verseker en te bly in die plekke waar apartheid hulle gevestig het. Niemand het ooit kon dink dat die hoop en drome wat hulle gekoester het terwyl hulle teen apartheid geveg het, so wreed onderdruk sou word deur dieselde regering waarvoor hulle hul lewens opgeoffer het nie.

Gemeenskapsorganisasies soos die MPAEC in Mandela Park het 'n betekenisvolle bydrae gemaak tot die bemagtiging van daardie gemeenskap deur die mobilisasie en artikulasie van die stemme van die arm en kwesbare groepe in die samelewing om weerstand te bied teen die Staat se hegemonie ten opsigte van die beeindiging van dienste en die uitsetting van gesinne uit hul huise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank God, my Creator and Saviour for the wisdom, determination, courage and blessings he bestowed upon me. Without Him, this work would not have succeeded. Many thanks go to my project supervisor, Professor Fanie Cloete for all his positive and constructive guidance and advice. You made this possible. Grateful acknowledgement goes to the Western Cape Department of Health for sponsoring my studies and for all the study leave offered.

My gratitude also goes to all those who have studied with me including Kennedy Gaya, Mbuyiselo Sigcu, Joe Mhlom, Ricardo Kayster and many other fellow students. You provided the motivation to keep me going. Thanks to my friends Godfrey Jordaan and his family, Neil Draghoender, Sipho Jantjies, Ndoyisile Sekwati and others. Your support was marvellous.

I also wish to extend my appreciation to Conrad Mintoer who passed away while I was busy conducting this research. You were a great inspiration and thanks for sharing my dreams. You are remembered.

More importantly, I am grateful to all my family members who stood by me during the most difficult times of my life; my mother, Sarah Plaatjies; sister, Gladys Gaya; and brothers, Bennet, Llewellyn and Eugene Plaatjies. Thanks very much for your prayers and support. To my father, Hope Plaatjies who passed away recently, you have blessed me with your wisdom. This study is dedicated to you. I am also grateful to my girlfriend, Khanyiswa Pinise for being so supportive and helpful. You are one of a kind. To all others who were involved directly or indirectly and whom I have not mentioned, I thank and honour you.

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CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background and Introduction

The commodification of the necessities of life has resulted in rebellions around South Africa but very limited note was taken of these community struggles in the media and academic circles. The ‘community struggles’, as they have been labelled, were chiefly aimed against government’s policy on cost recovery and service cut-offs (Mc Donald & Smith, 2002:12). It is disturbing to learn about the limited attention given to these struggles in academic or media circles and in cases where attempts were made to write about them, the works of such authors rather tend to romanticize them. One cannot help being moved by the bravery of a teenage boy who sacrificed his life to ensure that a neighbour did not endure a winter without electricity, or by a courageous woman who stared down armed law enforcement agents to ensure that no old lady is evicted from her house. It is about affirming humanity’s unconditional right to services and the means to life (2002:13). In a neo-liberal context however, this is far-fetched, this is taboo.

The community rebellions are basically aimed at blocking and reversing dispossession, confronting household evictions as well as water and electricity cut-offs (Harvey, 2001:29). These are largely reactive and defensive struggles. Mostly, they revolve around singular issues and are periodic mobilizations that are not of ongoing nature and do not lead to sustained confrontation of the neo-liberal policies of the State (Bond, 2000a:35). Some authors are concerned that the Mandela Park contestation could turn into a showcase of ‘isolated militancy’ suffocated by sustained repression, against the background of an African National Congress (ANC) endorsed, well-networked and well-funded South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) as being the sole organisation able to represent community concerns ‘legitimately’ (Rostron, 2002:8).

The severe scarcity of resources including the ability of the ANC to make strategic concessions and to enforce repression, feed into the difficulty of sustaining mass action. Because the activities are confrontational in nature (that is, against the police and law enforcement agencies), lengthy court battles are inevitable and have depleted available resources so quickly that it became impossible to identify with similar struggles around the

country or abroad. In fact, Mandela Park activists often find it difficult to work with their counterparts, even around Khayelitsha because of lack of funds for transportation and telephones.

Additionally, there have been limited and fragmented attempts to mobilize communities over issues such as family violence, crime and the generation of collective livelihoods. These show that current struggles are focusing on other issues beyond the mere struggle for survival.

In an attempt to reach beyond defensive reactive rebellions, the Mandela Park Anti- Eviction Campaign (MPAEC) recently took a bold initiative by opening a community run school (Pillay & Pithouse, 2003:32). This happened after the MPAEC seized an old school building, enrolled 1800 new pupils within the first year of operation and recruited 28 teachers who were previously unemployed to start teaching. The pupils consisted mainly of those who were refused enrolment at other schools for reasons relating to age, examination failure or fees. The Western Cape Department of Education initially agreed to allow the school to operate but later closed it down (2003:32).

Like most community movements, MPAEC members are very cautious of identifying themselves as a formal organisation that has links with organised national structures. This is in part due to the fact that radical civic leaders are co-opted, leading to a general belief among community movements that formalization promotes internal oligarchies that usually blunt 'militancy', which is the main source of movement influence (Eckstein, 2001:7). As a result, community movements opted for the strategy called 'disruption'.

Community movements believe that formalization is detrimental to the ability of subordinate groups to effect societal change and that the poor can institute change through 'disruption', which can be achieved without formalization (Pivan & Cloward, 1979:29). Barchiesi (2001:10) argues that it is the unpredictable and informal character of these movements that provide them with power. Some authors are of the opinion that community movements should amalgamate into one new working class movement that would be an alternative to the ANC, especially on its own home turf, namely the poor black majority (Pillay & Pithouse, 2003:38). Others argue that community movements must remain independent but should form strategic partnerships on important occasions such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the World Conference against Racism (Bond, 2000a:34). Many others expect that the

well-oiled machinery of the labour movement, in collaboration with community movements, should challenge the neo-liberal policies of the ANC government.

It is the renewed entrenchment of working class poverty under an ANC government that made poor people realise that access to electricity, housing and water, which are unaffordable at market prices and are increasingly privatised, cannot be acquired under conditions of low and irregular wages. Furthermore, the success of the ANC government in responding to the militancy of community movements has sparked off new spheres of contestations, explosive demands and solidarity among the oppressed (Rostron, 2002:08). The leadership of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has been co-opted by the post-apartheid government and their corresponding soft approach to the bullying neo-liberals has reinforced the need for community movements to 'go it alone.' These sentiments have caused activists and community members to write-off unions and to put their faith completely in the community movements.

It should be noted that every meeting in Mandela Park focuses on 'betrayal'. The grievance is that the mass mobilization of the 1980s and the struggle against apartheid have been seriously betrayed and undermined by the ANC. Most speeches focus on how particular groups and individuals have hijacked the struggles of the people. The community movements are described as the true representatives of the liberation that can never be defeated. It is because of this ability to maintain the commitment of followers and activists that these community movements succeed in overcoming setbacks (Sekyi-Out, 1996:03). The current repression provides fertile ground for myths that sustain and inspire rebellion. At Mandela Park, vigorous debates are taking place about several issues such as forming a united front against the ANC, the nature of leadership and the form of organisation. Despite all these things, community movements have won a good number of defensive battles and have thus frustrated the State's efforts to impose neo-liberalism and cost-recovery.

Khayelitsha has a rich history of the struggles against apartheid. The township has named its roads in honour of liberation heroes such as Govan Mbeki, Steve Biko, and Albertina Sisulu and, in Mandela Park, Chris Hani and Braam Fischer. As this researcher drove down Chris Hani Road on 26 November 2006 to honour an appointment with one of the activists, a group of about a hundred people, mostly women, gathered on one street corner, calling for Max Ntanyana's release from Pollsmoor Prison. The small crowd sang an anti-apartheid song from

the 1980s, ‘Senzeni Na?’ (What have we done?). Amid these squabbles, preparations for the 2010 world cup were in full swing. Ironically, those who suffered the worst deprivation under apartheid also ended up paying the highest price for democracy. A decade into the Promised Land, the poorest of the poor remain mired in gut-wrenching misery.

1.2 Problem Statement

The adoption of neo-liberal policies by the ANC since 1994 has increased the hardships experienced by poor communities such as Mandela Park (Khayelitsha). These communities are disadvantaged and defenceless against the power of the State.

1.3 Hypothesis

Community organizations such as the MPAEC make a significant contribution to community empowerment by mobilizing and articulating the voices of the poor and vulnerable groups in society to resist the State’s hegemony with regards to service cut-offs and household evictions.

1.4 Study Objectives

The objectives of the study can be categorised the following way:

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the extent to which the MPAEC has empowered the Mandela Park community to resist the effects of the neo-liberal policies adopted by the State since the structural transformation of the SA economy in 1996 which they believe is behind the commodification of their means to life.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- Assessment of the impact of neo-liberalism and globalisation on vulnerable groups in society;
- Conceptualising resistance to disconnections and evictions;
- Understanding how a community reacts when faced with major transformation of its livelihood by analysing the activities of the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) in Mandela Park

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

This section will focus primarily on the subject of the study, the method of data collection and analysis and the research design. In addition, the interview method will be discussed.

1.5.1 Subject of study

This study focuses on the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign, community members and civil society groups involved in the socio-economic rights' debate in the township. The emphasis of the study is on the grassroots, the organisations, the community members and the MPAEC. The researcher has chosen this area of study because:

- It has a history of fighting against neo-liberal policies of the State,
- The researcher is familiar with the activists and members of the community,
- The township has a rich history both in terms of how it came into existence as well as of the demographics of the residents.

1.5.2 Data collection and analysis

The research methodology follows an approach of data collection that also provides the community with the necessary feedback from the study findings:

- A historical descriptive study of the township will be conducted through census statistics, municipal data and literature survey;
- The information will be analyzed and an overview of the township will be taken into account;
- Several individuals and groups will then be targeted through purposive sampling to elaborate on specific issues that the research has highlighted;
- The next step is to create a first draft of the research paper;
- The draft paper will then be presented to:
 - 1) Members of the MPAEC in the form of a focus group or workshop where the main issues, which have been highlighted by the research, will be reflected and commented upon. The focus group will also create an opportunity for self-reflection among group members.
 - 2) Members of community groups for comment on information.
- The final thesis will be drawn based on these reflections, comments and questions.

1.5.3 Research Design

The design resembles a qualitative approach and provides a holistic account of the research topic. The researcher employs a combination of the following research strategies:

- 1) *Comparative literature survey* - This method exposes the researcher to a magnitude of data from which the most relevant information can be selected (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997:58).
- 2) *Personal Interview Method* - This will enable the researcher to probe more extensively into an issue by questioning the interviewees (Davids, Theron & Mapunye, 2005:125). These interviewees will be selected through the *Purposive Sampling Method* on the basis of their involvement in the MPAEC or their involvement with the community e.g. local government officials, the police, etc.
- 3) *Focus Group Method* - This will act as an extension to the interview method. Participants from the same background or organization will discuss and interact on certain issues pertaining to the study. The participants are selected on a purposive basis depending on their levels of activity and positions within community structures.
- 4) The researcher will also employ the *Direct Observation Method*.
- 5) *Case Study Analysis* of Mandela Park including historical descriptive study of the community will be done.
- 6) The *Narrative Approach* will also be employed.

1.5.4 Interview Methodology

The Purposive Sampling method will be employed to select the interviewees based on the degree of their involvement in the Mandela Park community. This method will be enhanced further by the utilization of the ‘snowball sampling’ method (Mc Donald & Smith, 2002:6). Concerning this method, the researcher interviews a particular person, who brings him in contact with another person, who in turn brings the researcher in contact with someone else, and so on. To achieve this, a combination of personal interview, telephone interview and focus group discussions will be employed. Through interviews, community organisation materials and qualitative research analysis, the various activities, organisational trajectories and emergent relationships with the State, the private sector and other actors in civil society (local, national and international) are presented and analysed. A list of all persons interviewed will be found at the end of the thesis.

1.6 Conceptualization

1.6.1 Mobilization

- Prepare forces for action: to organize people or resources in order to be ready for action or in order to take action, especially in a military or civil emergency, or to be organized for this purpose.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.2 Activism

- Vigorous action: vigorous and sometimes aggressive action in pursuing a political or social end.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.3 Apartheid

- Segregated political system: a political system in South Africa from 1948 to the early 1990s that separated the different peoples living there and gave privileges to those of European origin.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.4 Globalization

- Global political view: the belief or advocacy that political policies should take worldwide issues into account before focusing on national or State concerns.
- Make something become adopted globally: to become adopted on a global scale, or cause something, especially social institutions, to become adopted on a global scale.
- Become or make something become international: to become international or start operating at the international level, or cause something, especially a business or company, to become international.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.5 Neo-liberalism

- Political philosophy: the political view, arising in the 1960s, that emphasizes the importance of economic growth and asserts that social justice is best maintained by minimal government interference and free market forces.
- A set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last 25 years or so. Although the word is rarely heard in South Africa, you can clearly see the effects of neo-liberalism as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer. "Liberalism" can refer to political, economic, or even religious ideas. "Neo" means we are talking about a new kind of liberalism.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.6 Commodification

- Traded item: an item that is bought and sold, especially an unprocessed material.
- Useful thing: something that people value or find useful.
- Making of a product into a commodity: the process by which a product reaches a point in its development where one brand has no features that differentiate it from other brands, and consumers buy on price alone.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.7 Community

- People in an area: a group of people who live in the same area, or the area in which they live. e.g. a close-knit fishing community.
- People with common background: a group of people with a common background or with shared interests within society.
- Nations with common history: a group of nations with a common history or common economic or political interests.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.8 Resistance

- Opposition: opposition to somebody or something.
- Refusal to give in: refusal to accept or comply with something.

- Ability to withstand damaging effect: the ability to remain unaltered by the damaging effect of something, e.g. an organism's ability not to succumb to disease or infection.
- A force opposing another force: a force that opposes or slows down another force

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.9 Social Movement

- A type of group action. They are large groupings of individuals and/or organizations focused on specific political or social issues, in other words, on carrying out, resisting or undoing a social change.
- A group of people with a common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals; "he was a charter member of the movement".

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.10 Repression

- Being kept down by force: the process of suppressing a population, or the condition of having political, social, or cultural freedom controlled by force or military means.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.11 Rebellion

- Attempt to overthrow government: an organized attempt to overthrow a government or other authority through the use of violence.
- Defiance of authority: opposition to or defiance of authority, accepted moral codes, or social conventions.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.12 Struggle

- Great effort to overcome difficulties: a great effort made over a period of time to overcome difficulties or achieve something.
- Fight: a prolonged fight or conflict.

(Encarta World English Dictionary & Microsoft Corporation, 1998-2005)

1.6.13 Cost Recovery

- The recovery of all, or most, of the cost associated with providing a particular service by a service provider. For publicly owned service providers, this may or may not include a surplus above and beyond the cost of production, whereas for private-sector providers, it necessarily includes a surplus (i.e. profit). In either case, the objective is to recoup the full cost of production (McDonald, 2000:18).

1.7 Literature Survey

This study analyses the operations of the MPAEC and the responses of the community to service delivery concerns. The research evaluates the South African economic policy against literature on international opinion on the political economy of neo-liberalisation, globalisation and service cut-offs. Contemporary global processes are highlighted in this analysis namely ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey, 2001:24).

The reader is further introduced to conceptual literature on social movements that are useful in understanding the politics and mandates of social movements. Törnquist (1999:23) describes social movements as being contextual and relational and being the results of powerful economic processes. The study also investigates the centrality of MPAEC’s identity as a community-based movement in Mandela Park and the ways in which it defines the organisation and politics of the community.

Further, the conceptual debates are placed in the context of the mixture of liberal democracy and economic liberalisation of South Africa. These analytical debates are helpful in examining the specific ways in which community organisations, activists and the MPAEC act as an umbrella movement to negotiate and mobilise on the grassroots level. In addition, an attempt will be made to unpack the structural relationship between the complex politics of diverse social movements involved in counter hegemonic struggles and these economic processes (Chin & Mittleman, 2000:16).

The MPAEC has faced leadership and organisational challenges as a diverse community-based movement. The study therefore explores the circumstances under which MPAEC’s leadership has emerged and how group diversity has impacted upon the organisation. The scarcity of financial resources is a challenge to the sustenance of an MPAEC leadership that

reflects the diverse nature of its activists and organisations. MPAEC activists have been forced to defend themselves in court as a result of summons for illegal occupation of land and State-built houses as well as interdict and arrests by financial institutions for putting evicted families back into their houses.

This research compiles the empirical analysis of the MPAEC by exploring the symbolic power the movement has generated and the manner in which it resisted the State's hegemony in privatisation and cost-recovery concerns. It gives an account of the damaged relationships between the State and the community and elaborates on the effects of conflict on civil society. Recommendations are made to mitigate the damage existing in State-community relationships. It is hoped that this study will not only be of academic value, but also of value to community organisations involved in the contest against neo-liberalism in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2 – Literature Review

Introduction

In this section, the research follows the paths of global economic transformation through dramatic shifts in organisation of production, to the restructuring of the local State under neo-liberalism. In so doing, the study demonstrates the manner in which the 'local' has become the staging point for the emergence of new social movements resisting the worst affects of this new economic order and the conflict it foments.

This section is divided into four parts. The first part briefly outlines the contours of the global neo-liberal economic order, demonstrating how the set of principles and market reforms grouped under this term have come to characterise modern political economy. It offers a characterisation of neo-liberalism's accumulation strategy.

In the second part, the focus turns to South Africa under apartheid and highlights the continuities between the global restructuring of capital and the various State reforms and specific struggles of communities. This is followed by a discussion and analysis of the specific contexts of the transition and the reinvention of the post-apartheid State under the tutelage of the market and GEAR (the neo-liberal macro-economic framework adopted by the ANC government in 1996).

The third part focuses on how the changing discourse of the ANC alliance contributed to widespread poverty, unemployment and the shedding of vital job opportunities among the black poor majority. The final part describes how the ANC optimised and encouraged private sector investment in the local State by putting in place a tight legislative framework and passing a number of legislation to ensure the survival of the neo-liberal orthodoxy.

2.1 Globalisation and Neo-liberalism

Different authors over time have suggested various concerns and meanings for the term 'globalisation' as it became increasingly utilised in the last two decades. Chomsky (1999:7) is of the opinion that this 'political economic paradigm' is allowing a handful of private interests to maximise their personal profit by controlling as much as possible of social life. It is from

this point of view that globalisation is understood to be the intensification and extension of the rule of profit and the market over people's collective and individual lives, and not a neutral presentation of a new worldwide phenomenon of cooperation. The world's poor majority have experienced increasing hardship and poverty during the last thirty years because of the ever-changing world order (Chin & Mittleman, 2000:102). The rich and powerful have heralded globalisation's positive aspects as a new golden age and have come to present it as a 'global village' with opportunities for greater wealth generation through the introduction and expansion of information and communication technology systems. Some authors however argue for an understanding of these changes in a context of the global capitalist system that is being subjected to various changing needs (Harvey, 2005:6).

The capitalist crises during the 1960's which was characterised by overproduction, declining profits, worker struggles and accumulation, inspired a global search for new areas of investment and more markets (Bond, 2000a:24). In an effort to remove obstacles to further accumulation, a range of reforms was instituted by capital. The aim of these reforms was to remove the obstacles to the rule of profit over production processes and was subsequently grouped under the term 'neo-liberalism'. It is under neo-liberalism that nation-states have come to learn that their ability to improve the lives of their peoples and minimise their vulnerability to global market fluctuations has been profoundly handicapped. Bond (2000b:25) is of the opinion that these neo-liberal reforms translates into increased mobility and profit for capital. Neo-liberalism puts a price tag on every aspect of life resulting in the market being the sole determinant of value. All life is commodified under neo-liberalism. On a global scale, neo-liberalism has resulted in increased unemployment, poverty, deterioration of social relations, inability to access municipal services such as housing, electricity, water and education (Chin & Mittleman, 2000:102).

Thus, under these reforms and ideology, citizens of the world were forced to subject themselves to the rule of the market and to surrender the control of their collective and individual lives to profit (Harvey, 2005:7). Water, a natural resource to which people previously had free access, has been turned into big business today and people have access to it based on their ability to pay. Under neo-liberalism, electricity, water, education, healthcare and housing - everything has been commodified (Bond, 2000a:26). The right of access to the basic necessities of life such as water, electricity and sanitation, have been turned into a

wealth generation opportunity by a capitalist few (2000a:27). Nattrass & Seekings (2001:470- 90) state that neo-liberalism resembles the following key elements:

1. *Privatisation*

This is the disposal of State-owned enterprises, services and goods into the hands of private sector, that is, the sale of key industries, schools, banks, hospitals, railroad and water. Privatisation results in price increases, which often makes the services and goods inaccessible to the poor, and concentrates wealth into the hands of few.

2. *Deregulation*

Deregulation is the reduction of State interference with private enterprise and the abolishing of State imposed price regulation and any restriction that could be harmful to profits.

3. *Cutting Public Expenditure*

Social welfare expenditure such as health care and education are reduced. This translates into the safety net for the poor being eroded. Public expenditure must be reduced while introducing wage moderation and labour flexibilisation.

4. *The Rule of the Market*

This deregulates private enterprise from any State imposed restrictions irrespective of how damaging this could be to society. Greater transparency to global investment and trade, the abolishing of price controls, capital, services and goods must have total freedom of movement.

According to Stokke & Oldfield (2004:45), an overwhelming majority of citizens throughout the world is experiencing the negative impact of neo-liberal policies as a direct assault on their survival systems. As a result, poor people have responded to these policies in a number of ways including illegal reconnection of water and electricity, non-payment of services, campaigns, protest marches, as well as court battles to ensure that basic services remain accessible. Many groups, individuals, organisations and non-governmental organisations are collaborating while others congeal into larger formations to form a united front, the 'Anti - Globalisation Movement', to challenge the neo-liberal juggernaut (Harvey, 2005:29).

2.2 South Africa - A Neo-liberal Transition

It is true that one of the greatest tales of global neo-liberalism featured prominently in the South African transition to democracy. The logic of neo-liberalism has contributed towards shaping the most vital aspects of the modern South African polity. Under apartheid, the government ensured that the white minority population received a wide range of social protections by means of dispossessing the black majority (Rostron, 2002:12). The pressures exercised by various social forces including the activities and resistance of the liberation movement, would eventually facilitate the demise of the apartheid.

State and bring to an end the benefits enjoyed by the privileged few. Leitch (2003:24) is of the opinion that the successor government was completely out-manoeuvred by the apartheid negotiators during the Congress of Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks and was given very limited space to move. However, it is important to note that the negotiated CODESA trade-off was a compromise between capitalist stability and majority rule. The National Party handed over the unitary rule of a deeply impoverished and unequal society while the African National Congress accepted that there would be no radical redistribution or expropriations and has undertaken to safeguard the maintenance of existing production relations.

According to Bundy (2004:68), the pursuit of neo-liberal orthodoxy by the macroeconomic policy of the ANC government and its advocacy of deregulation, debt reduction, investor-friendly provisions and fiscal discipline, resulted in widespread poverty among the black poor majority. McKune (2002:45) states that the South African transition was characterised by a 'deal' or a 'pact' between the ANC and private capital. Big businesses agreed to sign up to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in return for access to global finance and trade as well as macroeconomic stability. From a structural perspective, this implied a collaborative coalition between the ANC and big businesses, consisting of emerging black business and white business, working together in a distributional pact while promoting BEE and globalisation (Bundy, 2004:74).

By the time of handing over of power in 1994, the ANC promised to redress the inequalities of apartheid and create 'a better life for all'. However, the ability of the ANC to deliver on these promises was compromised by the terms of the negotiations of CODESA, which were

already set long before 1994 with neo-liberalism as a prominent feature (McKune, 2002:45). In an effort to keep up with its image as a liberation movement, this neo-liberal transition was portrayed by the ANC as the only manner whereby apartheid problems could be addressed. According to Legassick (2004:21), the ANC described the birth of democracy as 'phase one' of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), namely that an increasing number of black people would have access to higher living standards and BEE. The majority of apartheid's victims were told to be patient and to wait for 'phase two' of the NDR, namely the 'trickle down effect', when growth led by the private sector trickles down from a first to a second economy.

It would not be long before the market logic would slowly erode people's entitlement on basic services and develop and commodify these into avenues of wealth accumulation. Gradually, the logic of the profit motive would encroach on education, health care, housing, electricity and water. Some theorists are of the opinion that the advent of neo-liberalism in South Africa had already begun in the 1980's with the introduction of changes in the nature of work such as labour flexibilisation (Naidoo & Veriava, 2005:62).

Although GEAR is regarded as a clear articulation of neo-liberalism by the ANC, the phenomenon already infected the South African economy at a much earlier interval through reforms in the economy and labour. A loan from the IMF for US \$750 million was signed in 1993 by the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). According to Bundy (2004:62), structures such as the National Economic Forum (NEF) introduced forms of corporate governance in 1993 by grouping various sectors together on economic issues such as Value Added Tax (VAT). Bundy (2004:73), also opines that the shifts within ANC thinking are best demonstrated by holding up the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) against GEAR. Although the document's focus is on redistribution, it still does not seriously challenge neo-liberalism's growth path in South Africa.

The crux of GEAR revolves around a greater export orientation, lower pay for young people, labour flexibilisation and casualisation, cost-recovery measures, privatisation of services and State assets, cuts in social and public sector spending, tax breaks for big businesses, servicing the national debt, fiscal restraint and trade liberalisation (Naidoo & Veriava, 2005:61). Under

such a neo-liberal system, 'development' is reduced, watered down, and mixed-up with 'increased growth' with little regard for human life considerations. It is under GEAR that government's role changed from a 'provider' of services to a 'facilitator' or 'enabler' of services (McDonald, 2000:4). Under this logic, government has defined its social responsibility role as enabling the delivery of services but not delivering the services directly. Under this model, market forces became the determinant of real access to services with the State assuming only a facilitative role. Naidoo & Veriava (2005:62) note that while there is already a high number of people without access to basic services, cost recovery policies will effectively halt access for those who are too poor to afford payments and will put access to services further out of the reach of those without it.

Meanwhile, service providers lately utilised service cut-offs as the main tool of enforcing payment and regulating consumption. This has sparked-off a rise in community movements across the country and the mushrooming of community organisations in protest against these measures aimed at denying people the basic means to life (Legassick, 2004:20). In an attempt to shift the onus of delivery away from the State to the individual, service providers introduced the prepaid meter (McDonald, 2000:4). Under the prepaid meter system, the individual is forced to cut himself at the point of consumption (self-imposed cut-offs). This represents the starkest manifestation of a system where profit is prioritised over human life and where the individual is given access to basic services only if he/she can afford to pay for it. It is thus clear that the South African transition programme has embraced private capital and put neo-liberalism on a strong growth path, the terms of which were already determined as part of the negotiated settlement at Kempton Park.

2.3 GEAR, Poverty and Inequality

Since the adoption of the strategy in 1996, concerned political and social commentators made several negative predictions about the effects of the government's Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy, GEAR (McDonald & Smith, 2002:64). Similar to those of citizens of most other countries that have adopted neo-liberal economic policies, the lives of millions of low-income and poor South African families have been negatively affected by the effects of GEAR. Consequently, the changing discourse of the ANC alliance was the main cause of disagreement of most MPAEC activists interviewed:

“The African National Congress ascended to power in 1994 and told people to work because they wanted to remove any thought of entitlement from the collective consciousness of the masses, even entitlement based on a history of oppression, entitlements regarding education and social welfare as a tool of redress. From 1992 to 1994, people were told that they will not be given handouts. By saying ‘people will not be given handouts’ the ANC actually meant, ‘they are not in need of reparations, not in need of redress’. When in essence, the kind of reparation people wanted was a job (sic). And then they masterminded GEAR to deliver jobs, but certainly not architected to materialise job delivery” (sic) (Sipho Jantjies, personal communication, 12 April 2007).

The adoption of the GEAR strategy in 1996 represents the clearest example of the ANC government's somersault to the neo-liberal orthodoxy. GEAR delivered an attack on two broad fronts; namely the ability of people to make a living e.g. jobs, and on peoples' access to basic needs e.g. water, electricity and education (Barnett & Whiteside, 2002:91). The ANC vowed to go ahead with its implementation despite the widespread criticism and condemnation of GEAR, while former President Nelson Mandela branded the strategy as being 'non-negotiable'.

The effects of GEAR on poor communities have already been documented. In the last few years, many people in civil society have sensed that there was a real increase in their poverty while various studies have confirmed that 20-28 million South Africans (45-55% of the population) experience dehumanising and ongoing deprivation (Statistics SA, 2004; May, 2004; Taylor Report, 2002). Statistics SA (2004:14) concludes that when considering inflation, on the average, household incomes and expenditure in South Africa have decreased between 2000 and 2004. The country also experienced a decrease in the average individual income and expenditure. In reality, South Africans became poorer on the average between 2000 and 2004, especially when poverty is considered in relation to earning and spending (Statistics SA, 2004:14). Malnutrition and hunger are common factors among the poor black majority especially in the rural areas, where there is a recorded poverty rate of 71%, with 21,9% of households experiencing regular hunger (Taylor Report, 2002:70).

In all these, children are the worst affected (Leitch, 2003:24). Society in general, as well as children and their families in particular, are vulnerable to the long-term repercussions of child

malnutrition while the correspondingly high incidence of early school leaving especially by girl children provides grounds for concern. The situation of children in South Africa seem to be deteriorating all the time and points to an unfolding greater socio-economic crisis. However, the reversals in the past developmental gains of poor and working class people caused by the combined effects of a rampant HIV/AIDS epidemic, a crisis of affordability of basic services and high levels of unemployment, all constitute the real cause for concern. It should ring clear warning bells in the ears of the people concerned with socio-economic policy (Leitch, 2003:24). The experience becomes more painful for poor working class people when they consider the affluent and accumulative wealth of a handful of new elites (those with close ties to the ruling elite), who coexist with them. Inequality in South Africa has become more pronounced in recent years while the GINI Co-efficient (income inequality measurement standard) increased between 2000 and 2004 (Statistics SA, 2004:48).

Under conditions of such extreme inequality, no government can claim the existence of a workable and stable democracy because the very essence of democracy becomes compromised. Serious questions arise about the political sustainability of the situation as these separate worlds are allowed to drift further and further apart. The existence of such a desperate situation in a country blessed with good infrastructure as well as significant economic resources testifies to the disastrous effects of the government's neo-liberal macro-economic policy. In most societies in which they have been implemented, neo-liberal economic policies have contributed to increased inequality (Leitch, 2003:25). Because it prioritises a reduction in social spending, trade and currency deregulation, privatisation, export orientation and economic growth, GEAR will remain an anti-poor policy just like its counterparts worldwide. All poverty-alleviating measures under this neo-liberal framework, against the background of a highly unequal social structure, will amount to nothing meaningful but minimal welfare intervention.

Unemployment has increased despite the introduction of new forms of work under the regime of flexibilisation and GEAR's promise of delivering 409 000 jobs by the year 2000 (May, 2004:14). According to McKune (2002:52), the policy of 'labour flexibilisation' as advocated by GEAR, has resulted in the gradual disappearance of the permanent, full-time workforce as it encouraged the growth of a seasonal, casual, low-paid, flexible, feminised, unprotected workforce and informal trading as a means to survive. Makinana (2003:11) observes that in

February 2002, the official unemployment rate was 29, 4% while in reality; it was about 40% since the official figures did not cater for people who were too demoralised to seek work.

Makinana (2003:11) points towards the existence of a critical connection between poverty and the labour market. According to him, the increase in poverty, in large industrialised countries such as South Africa, is linked to labour market failure. When people lose their jobs, their ability to provide for their families is compromised. For many poor households, getting into debt or selling their meagre assets is often the only way out to cover their expenses.

When poor people start selling their assets, they fall into an almost irreversible backward slide which results in inability to weather-off future economic and personal setbacks. It is especially worrisome when productive assets such as cattle or land are sold because it destroys the economic pillars of the household and blots out all prospects for future recovery. Poor people's economic desperation can best be seen in the sale of smaller personal items. Barnett & Whiteside (2002:92) argue that it is difficult to claim that people are coping when they have begun to sell their own clothes or the clothes of their dead; these are actions of the desperately impoverished.

According to Barnett & Whiteside (2002:92), the total unemployment figures varied between 29% and 42% because the country's formal economy reduced vital job opportunities from 1994. Leitch (2003:36) points to the development of two important trends. The first is that the composition of the pool of working people is changing and the other is that the size of the employed pool is shrinking because of these neo-liberal policies. The economic vulnerability of the working class increases and hard-won labour rights are being eroded as the public sector downsizes, firms casualise, subcontract and as outsource labour and the South African economy 'informalise' labour (Leitch, 2003:36). Legassick (2004:20) believes one million jobs were lost since 1996 and that young people make up three-quarters of the unemployed in South Africa. It would therefore not be surprising if more youths turn to other forms of anti-social behaviour and crime because they have such few prospects under a highly unequal South African societal landscape.

A particularly bleak scenario develops, which should ring clear alarming bells for policy makers when the high fatality level of the impact of HIV/AIDS on young people is combined

with the crisis of access to educational institutions, the context of chronic poverty in which they live and the absence of future prospects for young people (McKune, 2002:12). Those in civil society should understand more clearly the picture behind the statistics – the break-up of entire families, orphanhood, hopelessness, hunger, grinding poverty, loss, and the downward spiral of human suffering. It is important, both pragmatically and conceptually, that workers and leadership understand the link between globalisation's international dictates its negative effects on the broader population, and the government's unswerving adherence to its neo-liberal macroeconomic strategy.

2.4 A Neo-liberal Legislative Framework

According to McKune (2002:16), guidelines for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) were already published by the Department of Constitutional Development in 1997. This was followed by a policy directive guiding infrastructure investment as well as investment in water infrastructure, called, The Municipal Infrastructure Investment Framework (MIIF). The MIIF made provision for new service providers other than the State and made a distinction between a service provider and a service authority.

In a clear move to optimise and encourage private sector investment in municipal services, the Southern African Development Bank established the Investment Unit for Municipal Infrastructure (IUMI) in 1997 (May, 2004:45). The bulk of the MIIU's funds come from international donors but this is spent on strengthening the private sector. Moreover, the Municipal Service Provision Restructuring Framework was signed by the Local Government Association of South Africa (SALGA) and COSATU in 1998. In accordance with this agreement, the public sector as a service rendering entity should be prioritised and be given preference. The agreement also concludes that the allocation of resources and the prioritisation of needs must be informed at all times by social need and not by profit. The agreement further prioritises certain service delivery principles namely democratic accountability, cross-subsidisation, lifeline provision, environmental sustainability and universal coverage. The agreement also identifies regulatory measures as far as the contribution of the private sector regarding the delivery of municipal services is concerned and states that it should be in addition to public sector service delivery.

In 2000, The Municipal Systems Act was adopted and it states that the basic needs of people should be prioritised by means of providing basic municipal services of a minimum level to all people based on the principle of universal access (Municipal Systems Act, 2000:20). It also states that a cost-benefit analysis should be done and the community be notified if a private service provider is considered. Furthermore, the Act states that municipalities should ensure access to adequate services and set the tariffs according to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) of the area.

The Strategic Framework for Delivering Public Services through Public-Private Partnerships was also published by the Department of Finance in 2001. The Local Government Department (DPLG) released the Municipal Service Partnerships White Paper in 2000. This document came to market private sector partnerships and used the notion of Municipal Service Partnerships to replace Public Private Partnerships (White Paper on Municipal Service Partnerships, 2000:3). Local government's role was now redefined to include the creation of an enabling environment wherein private service providers could function. The White Paper on Municipal Service Partnerships, (2000:4) argues that such service providers could collaborate with a municipality in the form of a private company, an NGO, a community or a businesses unit. Legassick (2004:19) notes that this is in direct conflict with the provisions contained in the 2000 Local Government Election Manifesto of the ANC, the 1998 Framework Agreement between COSATU and SALGA as well as the Water Services Act (1997), which declare public sector service provision as the preferred option.

It is clear that the ANC government worked very hard to ensure the existence of a neo-liberal framework for the privatisation of public services, especially judged by the magnitude of documents released by them. For McDonald & Smith (2002:47), privatisation is an illusive term, encompassing the disposal of public assets as well as introducing private sector principles and other private sector activities. According to Desai (2003:24), privatisation in the water services sector occurs when “all or some of the operations and assets of public water systems are transferred into private hands”. Commercialisation and commodification is closely associated with privatisation. Desai (2003:24) states that commodification occurs at the point where services or goods that were previously governed by non-profit rules become subject to rules that are profit oriented. As a result, water has to be commodified for privatisation to work smoothly. According to Naidoo & Veriava (2005:34), commercialisation can be said to have taken place at the point where a public utility adopts business-like

operational methods inspired by a clear profit motive. Thus, the argument is not about the private sector's involvement in water issues, because they have always been involved in water supply, either as suppliers of materials, constructors in water projects, informal providers of water or as consumers. The argument is rather about how deep their involvement is.

In addition to pressures from international formations regarding the privatisation of water, GEAR has also been an active supporter of the privatisation of water services in South Africa (Naidoo & Veriava, 2005:35). Therefore, one can expect that private capital will play an incremental role in water services' provision, especially in urban areas. According to Naidoo & Veriava (2005: 37), the competition between the eight bidders that participated in the water privatisation process in Nelspruit in 1998, demonstrates the eagerness of multi-national companies to enter this lucrative market. Of all the big water multi-national companies in the world, three are actively doing business in South Africa and these are Saur, Sues-Lyonnaise and Vivendi. Naidoo & Veriava (2005:38) observe that the notion of private sector participation rests on the belief that water challenges should be solved through market forces and private sector innovation.

In South Africa, various types of privatisation contracts exist. They include:

Service Contracts: This means that some functions such as billing and meter reading are sourced out to local or small businesses. This is usually a short-term measure while government remains responsible for operating and managing water systems (O&M) (Bond, 2000b:24).

Management of Assets: This implies that the responsibility of managing water issues, such as O&M, is given to the private sector. However, the government still decides water pricing and continues to finance working capital and investment. These contracts usually vary from three to five years' duration (Legassick, 2004:16).

Lease Agreements: According to Bond (2000b:41), government facilities are rented out to a private company tasked with the responsibility for the O&M of the system that is owned by the State. Use of the facilities is paid for by the private contractor. The private operator is responsible for setting the tariffs while the capital investment is paid by the State. The duration of these contracts vary between five and fifteen years.

Concessions: Ownership of the assets remains in the hands of the public sector but O&M and investment in water systems is the responsibility of the private operator (Makinana, 2003:11).

These concessions are generally longer-term, with the duration varying from 20 to 30 years, and they involve a large city with a substantially large scope (2003:01).

BOT (Build, Operate, Transfer) Agreements: In South Africa, it is known as BOT and is more or less the same as concessions but draws its difference from the fact that the water facility is being operated and managed, constructed and financed by a private operator after which it is transferred to the public sector (May, 2004:20).

Privatisation: According to McKune (2002:17), this entails the disposal of public assets into the hands of private capital. The right or the role of the State sector in water management ceases to exist. This model is unpopular and not widely followed outside England. South Africa follows the French water management model that revolves around management and service contracts only.

South Africa's water delivery systems have been influenced by other policies that are not necessarily water policies. The privatisation of water services has been fuelled by the neo-liberal orthodoxy of GEAR, the Municipal Systems Act, and the MIIU, all of which have no direct reference to water policies (Rostron, 2002:12).

Section 74.2 (d) of the Municipal Systems Act requires that the delivery of services be as 'cost reflective' as possible (Municipal Systems Act, 2000:16). Policies regarding specific services like sanitation, water and electricity have similar provisions. A directive of the White Paper on Energy Policy of 1999 requires government to develop policies, which promote 'cost reflective energy prices' (Mantashe, 2003:37). However, neo-liberalism's profit prioritisation is most clearly articulated in the National Sanitation White Paper of 1994. Mantashe (2003:37) argues that, "To ensure sustainable systems of sanitation, it would be important for users to pay". The objective of full cost recovery is made clear in some policy documents. Policy initiatives such as the Water Services Act, states that "users should bear the entire cost of bringing the service to them and also the cost of the management of catchment areas" (Water Services Act, 1997:13).

Desai (2003:9) states that the punitive measures for non-payment of services imposed by local authorities on a deeply impoverished people provide for the most visible manifestation of the widely predicted negative effects of neo-liberalism in South Africa. Household evictions, attachment of property and service cut-offs, receive considerable media attention and are now

common throughout the country (Desai, 2003:10). In legal terms, section 104.1 (f) of the Municipal Systems Act legalizes 'the seizure of property' by local authorities in instances where users don't pay their municipal bills (Municipal Systems Act, 2000:23). Because local authorities are not able to supplement significantly their pool of own-revenue through progressive tax methods, they now want to expand and finance the delivery of services by means of pursuing fuller cost recovery (Rostron, 2002:12).

A new kind of apartheid is being created by the prerequisites of the cost recovery model. McDonald & Smith (2002:35) argue that cholera researchers in the 1980s attributed the epidemic to the apartheid policy and that this alarmed apartheid policy makers because they believed the disease was water-borne. In an effort to stop contagion, the most affected areas were provided with safer sanitation by the apartheid State (McDonald & Smith, 2002:36).

However, these reversals in past developmental gains under an ANC regime that criticized the apartheid medical model made poor people to feel that they have been betrayed and sold out by the very liberation movement they have come to put their faith in. It is also the same liberation movement that came into power in 1994 that turned off the water-taps provided by the apartheid government in these cholera affected areas only because the people were too poor to afford the newly commodified item – water (McDonald & Smith, 2002:37).

McDonald & Smith (2002:34) argue that the 2000 Kwa Zulu-Natal cholera outbreak started in the Ngwelezane area as the local authority began cutting off access to clean water and forced hundreds of people to resort to unsafe sources of water and to drink from nearby rivers and streams. A hundred and seventy six innocent lives were lost while a further 83,600 vulnerable people were infected in the most devastating cholera outbreak in democratic South Africa as the ANC government pushed forward with its implementation of cost recovery and the unpopular GEAR strategy.

Conclusion

The rhetorical core of governance since 1994, has revolved around prioritising the 'delivery' of basic needs and services to South Africa's poor majority and in doing so, effecting meaningful socio-economic redistribution to, and empowerment of, that majority.

As this report has shown however, the reality has not even come close to matching the rhetoric, which has recently included President Mbeki's pledge to close the gap between what he refers to as the 'first and second economies' of South Africa. The main reason why the gap has not closed but actually widened is that the ANC State's approach to governance has remained embedded in a neo-liberal foundation. One of the pillars of that foundation is the prioritisation, by both State and society, of the accumulative 'needs' of corporate capital (the first economy) which, according to the building plan, will therefore provide the means to address the needs of the poor (the second economy).

Not only are the accumulative 'needs' of the capitalists to be the fount of growth and prosperity 'for all', but also the enduring socio-economic conditions of the poor themselves are identified as the main impediment to such accumulation. Is it any wonder then that an increasing number of poor South Africans have been openly and actively asking the (rhetorical) question – What kind of democratic governance is this?

CHAPTER 3 - Literature Review

Introduction

The tendency of ANC politicians and bureaucrats to be dismissive of criticism, coupled with their unwavering adherence to the 'no-alternative to neo-liberalism' mantra, caused many poor people to feel that they have been pushed too far and too hard.

This chapter is divided into four parts that follows the path of the government's manoeuvres to naturalise the acceptance of the duty to pay for municipal services rendered. It begins with an explanation of the launching of the ANC's Masakhane Campaign after the rent and service boycotts of the liberation era. The second section chronicles the 'bread and butter' realities of a desperately impoverished South African people and how the initial gains of the past became eroded under the neo-liberal path that the ANC has chosen.

The third section examines the literature of social movements, how they come into existence and how their struggles usually revolve around singular issues that are of a periodic nature. The last part focuses on the ANC's attempts to close down all avenues of contestation and popular discontent.

3.1 From Payment Boycotts to Masakhane

An important strategy of the liberation movement during the apartheid era was encouraging non-payment of services and rent boycotts (Adler & Steinberg, 2000:27). Edigheji (2003:23) notes that under apartheid, people's life strategies were underpinned by a general sense of commitment and unity in the fight against a common enemy namely the Apartheid State. As the ANC ascended to power in the early 1990s, much of the values and characteristics of shared ownership over resources would remain with the organisation and its membership. According to Adler & Steinberg (2000:27), the ANC government would later embrace neo-liberalism and adopt the GEAR framework in an effort to introduce good governance under neo-liberal dictates. The same shared values would later be called upon by the ruling party to support the unpopular commitments and policies it would enter into (Edigheji, 2003:23).

However, before the ANC government introduced privatisation and cost recovery as a policy option, it campaigned widely to prevent people from opposing the obligation to pay for basic

services (McDonald & Pape, 2002:37). The government embarked on a campaign named Masakhane (building together) in recognition of the strong culture of refusal to pay for services that was built during the liberation struggle. As responsible citizens of the new democracy, people were encouraged to pay for basic services. The Masakhane Campaign labelled the 'refusal to pay' as irresponsible and called it 'a culture of non-payment'.

Through Masakhane, the government recognised that people have to change their views about their relations to their basic needs and to each other (Bond, 2000a:24). According to Bond (2000a:24), this was especially important since government wanted to implement neo-liberalism based on the logic of individualised relations between basic services and people. At the same time, Masakhane encouraged individual responsibility for access to services as a sign of good citizenship. Masakhane naturalised the payment of basic services and advocates the right of companies to demand payment for services provided whilst promoting the acceptance of the duty to pay.

Edigheji (2003:25) states that South Africa's political somersault to neo-liberalism coincided more or less with the period of the Masakhane Campaign and resulted in the increase of precarious forms of work, the introduction of cost recovery logic in all spheres of life, and wide spread job losses. Heller (2003:142) affirms that the daily grind of poor people in neo-liberal South Africa resulted in the failure of Masakhane whilst the non-payment of basic services continued unabated as it became simply impossible for the poor to pay. As the Masakhane Campaign ploughed to a halt, the accumulation of personal debt in the form of service arrears became commonplace among the poor (McDonald & Pape, 2002:39). Service cut-offs became widespread as local authorities implemented aggressive cost recovery policies which resulted in the advent of community movements whose primary aim was to protect the right to access basic services such as water and to re-connect people to electricity and water supplies. The ANC's response was to criminalize the legitimate struggles of poor communities, marginalise protest actions against commodification, and arrest people for illegal re-connections (Bond, 2000b:27).

Heller (2003:142) states that in certain instances, the ANC government has responded to people's demands by providing concessions such as free 'lifeline' amounts of electricity and water to poor households. However, in an attempt to further the logic of commodification, the ANC sought for more ingenious ways to contain or circumvent contestation and has not

deviated from its commitment to implement neo-liberalism (2003:142). In some instances, the State utilised the same vehicle of struggle to entrench and popularise the commodification logic. One such example is the regulation of electricity and water consumption through the introduction of the prepaid meter (Adler & Steinberg, 2000:32). Promoted as a people-friendly initiative to prevent over-indebtedness and regulate consumption, the State utilised popular campaigns and certain civic organisations to market the initiative.

Edigheji (2003:51) points out that the prepaid meter forces people to pay before receiving the service and as a result, the people remain cut-off until they are able to pay. Prepaid technology also came to redefine and individualise the responsibility for accessing services by shifting the onus away from the State as service provider unto the shoulder of the individual. Prepaid technology has also proven to be more difficult to bypass and to tamper with and has increasingly prevented the contestation of the commodification system by means of illegal re-connections (Mc Donald & Pape, 2002:40).

3.2 Reversals in past developmental gains

According to Bond (2000a:139), cost-cutting and cost-recovery measures became an almost inevitable choice as local authorities were given an expanded scope of responsibilities coupled with reduced transfers from the national fiscus. In many instances, municipalities were forced to opt for the easiest but harshest methods namely service cut-offs by means of installing prepaid technology or by direct administrative intervention (Leitch, 2003:66).

As the pursuit of cost recovery policies gained momentum with local government bodies, many of the initially acquired gains pertaining to sanitation, electricity, housing provision and water have undergone serious erosion in the past few years (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:16). Surprising though, was the silence of local authorities on the huge cutbacks in central government transfers. Leitch (2003:69) is of the opinion that local authorities failed to challenge the ANC government for bigger transfers from the national fiscus. Instead, local authorities pushed harder to gather the entire costs of delivering basic services to poor households whilst accepting the fate of unfunded mandates.

According to Legassick (2004:18), the policy of cost-recovery had very far-reaching effects on the lives of poor people and amounts to an attack on their standard of living. Through evictions, cut-offs, overt violence, intimidation and legal action, cost recovery have come to

ensure its place under the South African sun. In addition, the cost recovery logic was in many instances enforced in ways that often reminds one of apartheid-style of forced removals and evictions (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:17).

In the context of a high unemployment rate coupled with an already harsh economic climate, the daily grind and financial hardship of millions of poor South Africans have been dramatically worsened by these neo-liberal policies (Nattrass, 2003:55). Some theorists claim that many people in urban areas are unable to afford service charges as well as payments on their tiny sub-economic houses and as a result, have moved back to informal settlements (Habib & Kotze, 2003:31). According to Edigheji (2003:51), many people have fallen victim to water and electricity cut-offs and have been forced to rely on illegal re-connections and fetching water and wood from unsafe sources. Very often, eviction notices and debt summonses are served in cases where illegitimate re-connections to services were made (Edigheji, 2003:21). However, it is the marches and protests against the impact of neo-liberal policies and the increasingly repressive and violent responses of the State, that prompted some authors to write about the 'criminalisation' of the poor (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:17).

A direct consequence of the fact that people had to revert to unsafe water sources is the reports of cholera outbreaks in KwaZulu-Natal in 2000, which made national headlines in the domestic and international media, and articulates the clearest example of the negative effects of cost-recovery policies on basic health (Habib & Kotze, 2003:31). According to Legassick (2004:14), many HIV-positive family members who are terminally ill and suffer from incontinence, vomiting and chronic diarrhoea are being taken care of by households without access to safe running water or toilets. The basic necessities for the treatment of infectious or terminal illness, as well as the provision of hospice and home-based care to people suffering from HIV/AIDS have reached an all-time low as the crisis around the affordability of municipal services gains momentum. What was found to be a political system increasingly at odds with the basic needs of its own people and a serious indictment of a society, is the contradiction that such a situation is allowed to exist in a country much praised for having one of the best constitutions in the world (Leitch, 2003:69). The daily grind of poor households under the cost recovery logic of the ANC State made it inevitable for poor people to feel that they have been pushed too hard and too far.

According to Makinana (2003:10), municipal authorities were branded as the immediate oppressors of community struggles and have largely been the focus of social movements because in most cases, they had to implement these unpopular policies. Additionally, Stokke & Oldfield (2004:76) affirm that there has been no official review of cost recovery policies and their impact despite the increase in community protests all over the country. The unwavering adherence to the view that neo-liberalism has no alternative, coupled with a tendency to be dismissive of criticism, are only some of the strategies that ANC politicians and bureaucrats have come to embrace (Hardt & Negri, 2000:26).

According to Makinana (2003:12), the ANC followed a more 'business like running' of municipal services, while the State, instead of being an active service provider, acts only as an insurer of basic services. Makinana (2003:14) also notes that basic services first had to be corporatised before being eventually privatised. Moreover, Heller (2003:22) states that people with the correct political connections benefited a lot from these wealth generation opportunities since they managed to secure board memberships of various companies such as the Johannesburg Water Company and Umgeni Water in Durban. According to Makinana (2003:14), the prepaid meters that have been installed at gunpoint in Soweto, were manufactured by Conlog Holdings, a company that had the late Joe Modise, who passed away not so long ago, as one of its directors. He was a prominent cabinet minister of the African National Congress. Makinana (2003:14) also asserts that the former ANC Treasurer General in KwaZulu-Natal, Diliza Mji and Lawrence Mushwana, the previous intelligence boss of the ANC, were both directors of Dynamic Cables, the company that was contracted to supply cables for the prepaid meters.

Even as electricity and water have finally been privatised, the ANC required that multinational companies collaborate with upcoming black entrepreneurs for the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) (Habib & Kotze, 2003:31). This move has seen local elites becoming very rich while the gap between the country's rich and poor continue to widen. Heller (2003:57) states that the costs of basic services have already dramatically escalated as a result of commodification. But where will the poor obtain the financial resources to afford municipal services when living in a community where unemployment is endemic?

According to Stokke & Oldfield (2004:76), more than 75 000 'Cape Townians' have witnessed the suspension of their water services between 2003 and 2004. For Edigheji

(2003:45), this means that each community is required to fork out the entire municipal service provision since cross-subsidization is rejected by the neo-liberal logic. Moreover, in some suburbs which remain largely white, rich people pay far less than poor people for basic services (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:17). It is the same black poor, who remain at the receiving end of the State's coercive measures taken against the weakest of society, whilst trying to extract payment in the form of service cut-offs, evictions, and repossession of property at gunpoint.

Edigheji (2003:47) states that cross-subsidization of the poor by the rich is rejected by the State since the rich succeed in lobbying for the maintenance of their privilege. As a result, the black poor are squeezed dry in order to enrich the bourgeoisies, who enjoy a highly parasitic advantage over the poor (Edigheji, 2003:47). According to Stokke & Oldfield (2004:76), the free electricity and water provided by the State in response to the social struggles, are completely inadequate and are in direct contrast with past commitments and promises, while the process of implementation and decision making also remains unilateral. Moreover, the neo-liberal discourse of the ANC State facilitated a return of the self-help logic that operated under colonialism, in which poor people had to deliver themselves from poverty; this resulted in the naturalising of the maxim, 'survival of the fittest'.

3.3 The Rise of Social Movements

According to Rostron (2002:15), the struggles of poor communities were not aimed at the forcible overthrow of the government although they robustly opposed the neo-liberal socio-economic policies. McKune (2002:45) believes that enforcing notable changes in the content and character of State functioning has always been a focal point of these community struggles. When grounding the goals and purpose of their socio-economic and political struggles, poor communities have often referred to two famous documents namely the RDP and The Freedom Charter, both of which affirm that 'the people shall govern' (ANC, 1994:01). However, something far different has been experienced by poor communities because irrespective of what the people desire and need, 'The Party and State shall govern' seems to be the norm. Rostron (2002:15) states that the contextual backdrop of the antagonistic activities of newly emerged social movements emanated from the so-called 'contract with the people' and the broken governance pledges and promises made by the ANC.

Adler and Steinberg (2000:30) claim that, in the last decade, South Africa has been regarded as a progressive and inclusive democracy by both international and domestic politicians and commentators. Most of the 'Chapter 9 institutions'¹ and the various structures that seek consensus in the Constitution have resulted in worldwide praise of the document. From a distant perspective, the South African democracy appears healthy, especially if judged by the existence of a plethora of social movements and organisations and a vibrant multi-party political system.

However, the reality of the South African situation, as analysed and catalogued in this study, is the narrow and enforced institutional boundaries of liberal bourgeoisie democracy; the manner in which it is implemented; and the high levels of socio-economic inequality (Hardt & Negri, 2000:26). A wide range of social movements began to surface as the ANC continued its assault on the dignity of the poor through increased retrenchments, service cut-offs, and evictions (Stokke & Oldfield, 2004:78). The lack of land redistribution, household evictions, and the disconnection of electricity and water services, were some of the main issues challenged by these movements. In direct response to State policy, and not because of marginality or poverty, new social movements started mobilising people mainly on defensive and particular demands (McKune, 2002:45). The ANC government's unwillingness or inability to be the guarantor of collective consumption and a provider of public services offered a special spark to the plethora of community movements.

Because of the general nature of the socio economic crisis, community movements point and concentrate their diverse demands in the direction of the ANC government as they continue to focus on issues such as access to health facilities, housing, electricity, water supply, and land titles (Stokke & Oldfield, 2004:79). Rostron (2002:14) argues that mobilisation as the only vehicle of social contestation is the main issue that distinguishes these community movements from trade unions, NGOs, pressure groups, and political parties. The rise of civil organisations also resulted in another important phenomenon, the rise of poor families as an indispensable source of counter-politics and counter-power. The irony however, is that the

¹ These are independent institutions established under Chapter 9 of the South African Constitution.

struggles of community movements only seemed to ensure that poor people remain in apartheid's ghettos (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:29).

The increase in State repression coupled with the breaking-up of challenges from outside corporatist structures by an ANC which is weighed down by the increased militancy of the poor, pose a significant threat to social movement activity in South Africa (Habib & Kotze, 2003:40). A real danger that can facilitate the demobilisation of community movements is the success of certain campaigns such as 'Operation Khanyisa' (switch on the lights), as people would no longer see the need for collective action once their lights are switched on.

The attainment of access to basic services contributed to abating people's anger and served as a catalyst for further social movement activity (Habib & Kotze, 2003:42). Because social movement activities are single-issue focused, particularistic and localised, there is a real and constant danger to their future existence. The State now exposed at a public level and faced with collective resistance from an increasingly militant society, simply moves to less organised areas and retreats from militant ones.

According to Legassick (2004:21), a serious challenge faced by the ANC government is the activities of the civil organisations. In a struggle aimed at preventing disconnections and evictions, community movements managed to stand up against the might of the ANC state and bravely defied its cost recovery policies (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:40). Leitch (2003:59) states that the creation of 'no-go zones of de-commodification' and the re-appropriation of basic needs by illegally re-connecting electricity and water, have reached catastrophic levels in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. In a struggle that has already produced martyrs, legends and heroes, community movements succeeded in inflating the number of people on the street to 20 000 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Leitch, 2003:59). As incipient as they might be, the activities and existence of new social movements have contributed positively to the entrenchment of South Africa's democracy, and do not only come as a result of contemporary South Africa's socio-economic realities (Ngwane, 2003:22).

It is clear that social movements are providing a real challenge to the boundaries of politics in the country. They speak the language of the poor and they articulate the interest of the poor.

They affirm the pursuit of a deep-rooted, vibrant and people-centred democracy that was also once adopted by the ANC (Rostron, 2002:16). The new community movements have initiated a struggle towards a more participatory and radical collective practice of democracy unlike the liberal, individualistic bourgeois democracy that came with neo-liberalism. The opinion of an MPAEC activist, Jiba Philemon affirms this:

“People are encouraged to group together in order to have one big voice to speak from...and to create this as a platform to challenge social injustices” (personal communication, 4 April 2007).

Another MPAEC activist, Goboza Fonky asserts that:

“All our poor communities are having a common outlook (sic) and are affected by a common problem. This common problem is what unifies us right-through South Africa, right-through the globe” (personal communication, 4 April 2007).

Moreover, many domestic and international movements, organisations, academics and individuals have started sympathising with the new social movements and supporting their struggles (Jaglin, 2002:23). Subsequently, new social movements have started networking with other struggles and movements across national boundaries and formed important alliances such as the International Anti-globalisation Movement (Ngwane, 2003:37). Social movements have forced political and social forces like COSATU, which harbours negative feelings towards social movements, to respond to and acknowledge both organisationally and politically, the import and impact of these struggles (Jaglin, 2002:23).

According to Rostron (2002:13), the positive impact of social movements on the deepening and extension of democracy across national boundaries can be attributed to the fact that social movement activity is centred at the level of the grassroots. . In addition to this, the movements follow a bottom up approach of engagement, complemented by a dominant character and content of struggle. As a result, new possibilities for meaningful dialogue and new avenues for engagement have opened up but otherwise have not succeeded in decreasing State-community conflict (Makinana, 2003:11). The increased activities and demands of the bedrock constituency of the ANC government, the black poor majority, have made it

impossible for the ANC to simply marginalise or ignore new social movements. Moreover, every citizen of South Africa, who has a general interest in ensuring not only the survival but the flourishing of its young democracy, should encourage these developments as they provide for a healthy and robust political atmosphere.

Jaglin (2002:25) observes that a major point of conflict and grievance at the local level in poor communities is State accountability to the citizenry. The breadth and depth of active participatory democracy has always been the key for realising democratic accountability by a ruling party or the State. State officials and party representatives must be willing to champion listen to and engage in dialogue with the citizenry about their needs. On the contrary, the ANC government has followed the strategy of limiting participatory democracy by putting institutional structures in place and presenting it as the only legitimate forums for listening to, and negotiating with the citizenry (Edigheji, 2003:27). The ward committee at community level is regarded as the dialogue structure for ensuring community participation. However, social movements quickly learned that the door to active participation both inside and outside these institutional structures of the State has been closed on them (Edigheji, 2003:27). As one MPAEC member, Magoka Samuels notes:

“The majority of people participating in the ward committees have been lobbied by the ANC and told to be loyal to the organisation. They don't tolerate something (sic) that is not coming from them, the ANC... they accuse us of being against the ANC... We inform them that we are opposed to the policies of the ANC, but not against the organisation” (personal communication, 14 June 2007).

Most social movements have been accused by State officials of being unable to engage constructively and effectively at the grassroots level (Jaglin, 2002:26). A factor that impacted on the moral, organisational and political hegemony of the State and the ANC was the activities of social movements outside the existing institutional structures of accountability. In addition, social movements continued their attempts to keep the door to the ANC's dialogue structure at the local level open (Edigheji, 2003:28). Consequently, a social movement accountability struggle confronted the ANC, one that could not be marginalised or entirely controlled by them. In communities characterised by a high degree of social movement

activity, and where social movements enjoy popular support, the ANC tried its best to resurrect the widely discredited and moribund South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) in an attempt to re-consolidate its organisational and political hegemony in poor communities (Hardt & Negri, 2000:29). The words of the Western Cape ANC Provincial Secretary, Ncebisi Skwatcha, illustrate this observation:

“In order for the priorities and programmes of government to be shaped by communities... and to keep ANC councillors close to the people, we need a strong civic movement. The ultra-revolutionaries will mislead our people if we don't have a dynamic and strong SANCO” (personal communication, 7 May 2007).

According to McDonald & Pape (2002:68), the nation's electricity supply company, ESKOM announced in 2001 that it had reached an agreement with SANCO to write-off large amounts of arrears of electricity bills in Johannesburg. This was however a cheap political stunt to undermine social movements whose struggles over prepaid meters and electricity cut-offs that forced the State to act. Although the door to active and direct participatory democracy has been shut in their faces, the new social movements have transformed the field of accountability and governance, whether the ANC wants to admit it or not.

3.4 Closing down the Space for Dissent and Contestation

The self-reproducing discourse of repression and marginalisation caused by the current terms of State-community conflicts is by far the greatest danger presented by the war over basic services (Adler & Steinberg, 2000:124). However, one would discover that the root of this process is embedded in the South African transition programme itself. Adler & Steinberg (2000:125) are of the opinion that the strategic trajectory of the ANC underwent a more general shift when it started negotiations with the Apartheid State after it returned from exile in the early 1990s. Some theorists argue that in the 1990s, the ANC watered down the achievements of the struggle by allowing 'negotiations' to become the supreme organising principle of its political strategy (Desai & Pithouse, 2003:39).

According to Natrass (2003:49), grassroots activists shifted their focus to other struggles that ran parallel to the actual negotiations of that period as the Apartheid State relaxed its repressive apparatus, resulting in a high degree of community mobilisation. Natrass

(2003:49) states that the ANC then started to re-orient the liberation movement to manage and suspend bread and butter struggles in an effort to prevent these struggles from detracting from the strategic course that the ANC has chosen. This move has caused many organisers of the liberation movement to become preoccupied with pacifying their members (Nattrass, 2003:50). By the time of handing over of power to the ANC government, a 'negotiations-centric polity' had been institutionalised by the ANC and most avenues of contestation had been closed down (Nattrass, 2003:51).

Adler and Steinberg (2000:129) comment that the ANC sold this strategic approach (institutionalised negotiations) as the only legitimate form of societal contestation and assured its incremental incorporation into the national imagination. Consequently, the overarching theme within the ANC and the government has ensured that any form of dissent is elbowed out and is regarded as anathema to it. In addition, all real space for strategic and ideological contestation had been closed down by the reconciliatory language of the ANC's national discussion such as Batho Pele, nation building, constructive engagement, etc (Adler & Steinberg, 2000:130).

For Bond (2000b:62), the placement of civil society organisations on the edge of the main current of the national interest comes as a result of the terrain these movements chose to occupy in civil society. He further argues that the possibility of finding institutional remedy through negotiations has been undermined by the terrain on which new social movements were forced to struggle due to the ANC's foreclosure of dialogue on macroeconomic policy and its import of neo-liberal restructuring. The national imagination constructed by the ANC, has consequently viewed these struggles as 'something uncomfortable' (Nattrass, 2003:52).

Meanwhile, the ANC government promoted its reconstruction and nation building agenda while discrediting the active resistance of social movements as being out of sync with the times (McKune, 2002:113). Race and class dimensions of the present conflict have consequently been obscured by this characterisation of community movements and their struggles. According to McKune (2002:114), the ANC opted to present the country as a homogeneous unit of one happy family while at the same time, dismissing the challenge posed by these community struggles. As a result, the image of harmony demanded by the

market and investors was jealously protected in the South African corridors of power. Moreover, the default consensus was that outside of the corporatist structures of engagement, there would be no terrain for civil society to engage with the State (Wooldridge, 2002:37). In this context, the objective interest of the nation provided justification for State repression of socio-economic struggles. Almost exclusively, such struggles are viewed as challenging the public order. According to Harvey (2005:62), social movements have no other avenue through which they can get justice than by protesting. In addition, this process resulted in the naturalisation of their continued marginalisation. In this manner, it is considered illegitimate and criminal to contest State policy outside the institutionalised structures of dialoguing.

The widespread criminalisation of dissent has its basis in the manner which the State is building up the imagination of the nation (Wooldridge, 2002:38). In this view, the poor are used as marionettes by outside forces and interests when they engage in mass action even at the local level. A local ward councillor, Solomzi Nguta characterises the MPAEC thus:

“The Mandela Park community was not against the project and it was not really them (sic) who were ‘toy-toying’, there are individuals behind this who want to mislead the community and want the benefits for themselves” (personal communication, 22 March 2007).

According to this view, dangerous individuals with self-serving agendas are behind these basic socio-economic struggles (Harvey, 2005:67). In an effort to undermine the credibility of their criticism, people participating in mass action are stigmatised in various ways. They are dismissed as being unpatriotic, militant, misled stooges, foreigners or agent provocateurs (Harvey, 2005:68). Wooldridge (2002:37) notes that by branding and stigmatising people involved in protest action, the State wants to naturalise the marginalisation of social movements while the subsequent repression of dissent and the non-negotiability of GEAR are indicative of the refusal of the government to talk to community organisations. For Hardt & Negri (2000:34), the vicious cycle becomes complete as civil organisations have to revert to public protest to have their demands heard.

Heller (2003:133) explains that the effective marginalisation of contestation and the heavy-handed reactions to dissent over GEAR within its own ranks provide an indication of the

ANC's approach to meaningful democratic opposition. The words of Joel Netshitenzhe, ANC head of government policy can be considered noteworthy:

“When pressure is exerted from below, the aim should be to complement the activities of those that exert pressure from above against the old order (sic)” (in McKune, 2002:101).

This implies that in the view of the ANC government, it is illegitimate and unacceptable for the poor to embark on socio-economic or political struggles against its policies and practices. In this context, it is a betrayal of the liberation struggle and a political heresy to go outside the institutional and organisational borders of dialoguing, which was laid down by the ANC and the ANC controlled government (Jaglin, 2002:28).

Maraïs (2001:115) states that the ANC continued to portray the new social movements as anarchists and criminals, while failing to regard them as frustrated and concerned people utilising the only option they are left with to express their grievances. According to Maraïs (2001:115), the ANC leadership chose to utilise the repressive apparatus of the State to carry out a sustained attack on poor communities when they realised that their strategy of labelling movement leadership failed to suppress the growth and activities of social movements. Both peaceful oppositional activities, focussing on ‘bread and butter’ grievances, and the right to utilise hard won democratic space had been de-legitimised by a well co-ordinated government programme to silence and suppress the collective and emergent contestations of the poor (Heller, 2003:134).

In labelling social movements, the ANC Chairperson, Terror Lekota delivered the usual ANC rhetoric:

“There are factions seeking to undermine the democratic victories of the liberation movement by irresponsibly pursuing anarchy and confrontation. We wish to condemn these actions since our own struggle have taught us that it is the work of the naïve and agent provocateur that encourage such mindless violence” (in Wooldridge, 2002:213).

With the clear intention of delivering a spine-breaking blow to social movements, the ANC State President, Thabo Mbeki soon waded in and portrayed social movements as the enemies of the State and liberation movement:

“Foreign and domestic left sectarian sections are carrying out a sustained attack on our policies and our movement. Those who treat us as their enemy must know that we will respond in adequate measure since we cannot allow the destruction of our young democracy” (in Jaglin, 2002:30).

Mbeki stated even further that:

“Our masses have transformed themselves into a constructive and law abiding citizenry....they have ended and negated their roles as a protest movement...and they have fought a protracted, costly and difficult struggle to attain these...they will never be forced to go back there. It is the same individuals who in the past sought to perpetuate and entrench the oppression of these masses, who are now opposing and working to destroy the ANC by mobilising the people to act against our movement. These actions go beyond our levels of tolerance” (in Marais, 2001:104).

The sustained struggles and mobilisation of new social movements were consistently viewed by the ANC and by President Mbeki as being political and as a social provocation, pushed by individuals who are riding on the backs of the poor majority in order to advance themselves (Jaglin, 2002:29). Legassick (2004:18) alleges that the State's insistence to listen on terms, and its refusal to talk, prompted social movements to engage in the struggle on a terrain other than that which the State control and dictate. As a result, the governance relationship of the ANC State with the new social movements was characteristic of a self-defeating and contradictory understanding and approach to the content and character of democratic expression (Ngwane, 2003:37). Moreover, the ANC government effectively provided self-help, apolitical and non-confrontational community based organisations with resources and institutional space while facilitating their development (Ngwane, 2003:56).

It is clear that the ANC is not secure about its governance powers and has been provoked by fear and loathing as social movements actively pursued the attainment of socio-economic

rights outside the narrow institutional boundaries of a legal and socio-political system that generally excludes the poor (McKune, 2002:127). This is affirmed by an MPAEC activist, Patrick Ngwenya:

“While exercising political power in death and life, the State wants to define even how citizens speak. Human life is separated from political and civil rights, and drawn under the sovereign power of the State” (personal communication 22 March 2007).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it can be inferred that what was envisaged as 'common' in the liberation movement (from basic services to the nature and forms of governance that a new government would assume), would thus be slowly encroached on by the market to be commodified and developed into areas for accumulation and the constitution of forms of relations and regulation appropriate to the logic of neo-liberalism. With time, water, electricity, housing, health care and education would come under the logic of the profit motive and any collective notion of 'the common' would be denied.

The limits of the transition have meant that neo-liberal orthodoxy defines the parameters of the State's approach to service delivery (or delivery of the 'commons'). What emerged as a result, are two conflicting narratives of the social commons created in the payment boycotts of the 1980s. For the State, cost recovery programmes have necessitated a de-legitimisation of the commons in the interest of restructuring parastatals and State institutions along lines appropriate to its macro-economic priorities. For many communities and critics of the government's growth path, in contrast, the commons have come to represent the central redistributive challenge of the new State and the need to be institutionalised.

In the first narrative, the payment boycotts of the 1980s were merely a means of leveraging the position of the liberation movement in relation to the Apartheid State. The persistence of non-payment in this context has been characterised as a pathology of 'a culture of non-payment' that requires the intervention of the State only in restoring law and order (i.e. payment). The second narrative, in contrast, treats the commons as a fundamental part of the

reproductive needs of poor communities, and the social income secured therein, as one of the few protections the most vulnerable have in relation to the capitalist market.

The clash of these narratives represents the conceptual basis for the contemporary conflict between the State and the communities, in relation to basic socio-economic services and their 'delivery'.

CHAPTER 4 - Case Study

Introduction

This chapter explains the array of complex arrangements made by the State to respond to community demands and 'maintain order' in Mandela Park - the focal point of the case study reviewed by this research. Without attempting to present a comprehensive account of all engagements in which this movement has been involved, only key moments in its history which have characterised the various forms of its relationship with the state have been selected.

The chapter is divided into six sections outlining the antagonistic engagements between the State and the Mandela Park community. The first section focuses on the history and migration of South African blacks from other parts the country to the Western Cape and the next section continues with a historical overview of how Mandela Park came into existence under the Botha government. The third section introduces the establishment of the MPAEC and the contemporary politics of community organisations. the last three sections examine the diary of events that unfolded as MPAEC activists openly defied and resisted the State's imposition of cost recovery, evictions and service cut-offs on the Mandela Park community.

4.1 Background: Black South Africans in the Western Cape

The tale of the black man and women in South Africa has always been one characterised by exclusion and marginalisation. Hundreds of black South Africans were forced to flee to Cape Town as a result of the defeat of the Xhosa war against colonial dispossession in the Eastern Cape (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992:4). Cape Town's first township, Uitsig was built in the late 1900s when apartheid was at its worst. Uitsig would later become Ndabeni, whose residents were relocated to facilitate the establishment of Langa in 1927.

The black population in the Cape Peninsula increased dramatically in the aftermath of the World War Two (Fast, 1995:24). A sudden population boom occurred throughout Cape Town's periphery as the new urban influx settled mostly in unregulated shacks and *pondokkies*. Many were scattered as tenants or plot owners throughout the predominantly

coloured and white residential areas while most lived in highly populated residential areas or swelled the numbers in the official locations and squatter camps.

Sayers (1987:13) states that racial segregation and influx control legislation turned Cape Town into a particular test case in the 1950s while under the apartheid regime. When the National Party government emerged in the late 1940s, Mr Jansen, the then Native Affairs Minister stated that, "...the drastical (sic) reduction of the Western Cape's Native population is a matter requiring serious consideration" (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992:27). Mr Eiselen, the then Native Affairs Secretary commented in 1953 that the native population "...settled in camps that are uncontrollable for local authorities, the ring of illegal, unplanned and uncontrollable concentrations of Bantu are drifting towards the cities" (Sayers, 1987:13). Similarly, the Cape Town City Council's Native Affairs Manager told a youthful Ben Turok and ANC veteran Dora Tamana in 1954 that, "the reduction of Bantu households residing in Cape Town is the policy of this government and migratory labour will be used to satisfy the Peninsula's labour needs".

Both the Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 and the Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 legalised the forceful removal of African families and were duly implemented by local authorities (Horner, 1983:44). The Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 proclaimed that African locations would be established and residence for African families in such locations would be compulsory. Horner (1983:45) states that section 23 (1) of the Urban Areas Consolidation Act of 1945 declared the entire Cape Peninsula as a Coloured Labour preference area. The Prohibition of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951 also placed statutory obligations on local authorities to cooperate with the provisions of the Act, to implement compulsory location residence for African families, demolish shacks without court order, remove Africans that are squatting illegally, and to establish emergency camps (Horner, 1983:46).

A powerful instrument in the organising of forced removals was the imposition of passes on women in 1954. According to Makosana (1988:25), the Western Cape then saw a period of violent forced removal of African families and the destruction of unregulated residential areas. Most of the African families were removed to Langa where they were forced to live in

emergency camps in portions of the location or in single male hostels. Others were removed to the Nyanga location established in 1946 and to Nyanga East that came into existence in 1958 and was renamed Gugulethu in 1961 (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992:330). After being sifted out by the authorities to Gugulethu, qualifying Africans could remain in the Peninsula as families and were allocated houses while 'illegal' Africans were completely deported from the Cape Peninsula area (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992:331). Many women forced to leave Cape Town altogether because they were particularly ill-treated by the apartheid authorities. The breaking up of family structures by turning as much of the African population as possible into migrant labourers was a particularly important strategy of the apartheid state (Meier, 2000:123). Moreover, the year 1954 witnessed the declaration of the Western Cape as a Coloured Labour Preference area (Horner, 1983:46).

By the mid-1950s however, large numbers of the African population could still be found residing outside locations in the Cape Peninsula (Bank, 2002:15). According to Bank (2002:15), these areas included Grassy Park (Cook's Bush) with 3800 Africans; Rylands in Athlone – 5200; Retreat – 5500; Salt River, District Six and Woodstock – 9300; Bellville, Goodwood and Elsies River – 13000; and Windermere – 15000. Furthermore, Bank (2002:17) states that most people were forced to move out of these settlements as authorities continued to demolish shacks in these areas. According to Greenback (1992:21), determined struggles were organised by ANC activists in certain cases but none proved successful against the repressive apparatus of the Apartheid State. In February 1975, Crossroads was established as a squatter camp and represented the first example of a successful but bruising struggle against the council-led demolition of shacks.

But before the struggle of Crossroads could fascinate the generations which followed, three squatter settlements around the University of Western Cape (UWC) attempted to resist their forced removal by apartheid authorities in 1974 (Budow, 1976:45). In the week following 8 August 1977, apartheid security forces evicted about 10 000 squatters in Modderdam. As security forces razed the camp, furniture was hurled onto Modderdam Road by resistant squatters as they charged at columns of policemen and chanted freedom songs and hymns. Many observers, spectators and squatters were hospitalised as apartheid policemen continued to disperse the crowd with teargas and police dogs.

From 16 to 20 January 1977, 15000 people were evicted from Unibel while a further 5000 residents were evicted from Werkgenot on 25 August 1978 (Kinkead-Weekes, 1992:26). Kinkead-Weekes (1992: 26) notes that Crossroads miraculously survived the brutal evictions due to the consciousness and experience of the women's committees in the squatter area. Inspired by the Crossroads success story, the United Democratic Front (UDF) went on to contest the establishment of Khayelitsha (Fast, 1995:28). In a classical manifestation of an apartheid-sponsored 'Black-on-Black' assault, South Africa witnessed one of its most brutal forced removals as 7000 squatters around Crossroads were eventually evicted from their area in June 1986 by vigilante groups. However, the clearest articulation of 'Black on Black' violence sponsored by the Apartheid State appeared in the form of a counter-revolutionary violence in Transvaal and in Inkatha in Natal from 1986 up to the 1994 elections (Bank, 2002:15).

As indicated earlier, the post-1986 influx of Africans into the Western Cape, together with the movement of the people into the big cities, resulted in the establishment of Khayelitsha on the outskirts of Cape Town (Meier, 2000:124).

4.2 Mandela Park: A Historical Overview

Apartheid sought to confine black people to the established homelands such as Transkei and Ciskei. However, the sustained multiple acts of resistance by liberation forces would eventually facilitate the demise of the apartheid regime and by the 1980s, people flooded the Western Cape in large numbers such that the regime could no longer regulate its internal borders (Bank, 2002:17). Throughout South Africa, black people occupied new and open spaces and named them in honour of their heroes. In Cape Town, the group of Africans who occupied a part of the periphery of Khayelitsha defied all odds and named their area Mandela Park, as a symbol of hope (2002:17).

Khayelitsha boasts of being the largest township in Cape Town and it is situated approximately 26 kilometres from the city centre. It has many sub-locations, one of which is the Mandela Park. The Botha government established Khayelitsha in 1983 and sought to enforce compulsory residence for African families in the township (Makosana, 1988:26). However, this was unrealistic and proved to be impossible since other townships such as Langa, Nyanga, Gugulethu, Crossroads and KTC were already established. Instead,

Khayelitsha mushroomed rapidly because of thousands of new immigrants from the Eastern Cape as the Apartheid State relaxed its repressive apparatus and repealed its draconic pass laws in 1986. Khayelitsha grew rapidly in the 1990s and is possibly the third largest township in South Africa after Soweto in Johannesburg and Mdantsane in East London (Bank, 2002:22).

According to Meier (2000:125), the Apartheid State was in close collaboration with the World Bank during the late 1980s and was persuaded by the bank to start making the necessary arrangements for the development of public-private-partnerships. According to this view, business would provide the capital for development while the investment would be recovered from the poor with profit. This strategy turned Mandela Park into a particular showcase of private sector-led development since it became the first South African township where a distributional pact between government and private capital motivated development. The ANC, which was the greatest critic of the apartheid housing policy, would later adopt this strategy as its standard housing policy (Meier, 2000:125).

In 1986, commercial banks began building houses in Khayelitsha on land that they bought from the State and established Mandela Park within Khayelitsha (Meier, 2000:125). Just as Mandela Park was named in honour of the former president, Nelson Mandela, so were all the streets of the township named after former heroes of the liberation struggle. In line with the struggle tradition of the ANC, names such as Thandi Modise, Ahmed Kathrada, Winnie Mandela, Bram Fisher, Peter Mokaba, Jenny Schreiner, Robert McBride, Wilton Mkwayi, Albertina Sisulu, James Calata, etc feature prominently on street nameplates in the area. These call to mind the time when all occupants of Mandela Park's newly constructed houses were loyal supporters and activists of the ANC. In the early 1990s, the local branches of SANCO, the Youth League and the ANC flourished in the area and attracted thousands of members (Barnard & Farred, 2004:56).

Regrettably, a household study recently commissioned by the Cape Town City Council revealed that fifty percent of families in Khayelitsha survive on less than R167 a month while the income of another third of Khayelitsha's residents stood at R39 per person per month. The repercussions of GEAR have come at great cost to Mandela Park's residents. The retrenchment of production line workers as a result of labour flexibilisation and casualisation preached by GEAR resulted in widespread unemployment in the area (Kistner, 2002:48).

Today, the majority of Mandela Park residents have lost their faith in SANCO, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the ANC. The general grassroots feeling is that those they have jointly entrusted with their lives have deserted them. They feel ignored and enraged about the ANC's refusal to listen to them and to address their housing problems (WCAEC, 2003a:1). In place of relief, they have been arrested, detained and evicted from their houses. As the ANC government continued its crack down on community movements, many activists of the MPAEC were bombarded with strict, apartheid style bail conditions by the courts (WCAEC, 2003b:1). Such bail conditions include banning them from attending political meetings and being under house-arrest from 6pm to 6am daily.

The voices of a group of singing women outside the Khayelitsha Magistrate Court on the 22nd January 2007 echoed an old freedom song, 'Senzeni na?' (What have we done?). This evokes mixed feelings especially because they direct the question to the government they elected. They do have a reason to ask; development in Mandela Park came to a virtual standstill because the banks own the vacant land in the area together with the land on which the houses are constructed. The electricity, the water, the house, the land – everything has been privatised in Mandela Park and there has been no development, no clinics, no schools (cf. Ntanyana & Fonky, personal communication, 4 March 2007). What made matters worse is that Leonard Ramatlakane, the Western Cape SACP chairperson and the provincial Minister for Safety and Security, is the person who presides over this whole strategy of 'arrests only, no negotiations' (Mackay, 2002:1).

4.3 Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign - The Early Days

Towards the end of January 2001, groups of community activists began to organise and campaign against evictions and service disconnections in Cape Town. According to Barnard & Farred (2004:57), Tafelsig in Mitchells Plain represents a clear case of community militancy because the people have been battling council-led evictions since the previous year. Groups of people came together and identified themselves as the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) or Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (WCAEC). Areas such as Mfuleni, Tambo Square, Delft, Gugulethu, Valhalla Park, KTC and Athlone represented strongholds of the Anti-Eviction Campaign where activists confronted household evictions. In Mandela Park, some shop stewards of the South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) facilitated

contact with the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and were brought in touch with people who experienced similar problems all over Cape Town (2004:57).

The AEC devised a strategy that focused on two major fronts namely continued negotiations with the banks and government as well as community mobilisation and mass action. By late 2002, Ramatlakane disparaged the MPAEC, claiming they were only a 'handful of people'. Ironically, the MPAEC succeeded in attracting hundreds of people to its bi-weekly meetings in Mandela Park, on Wednesdays and Sundays. An MPAEC member, M. Samuels relates that:

"We were only a semi-organised group at first. It was not until the end of January 2001 that our real campaign against the banks started. Every Sunday and Wednesday we held our bi-weekly meetings, which were attended by hundreds of MPAEC supporters. Leonard Ramatlakane accused us of being only a 'handful of protesters'. But the attendance at the meetings tells another story. Leonard Ramatlakane has turned down our invitations to attend these meetings and to discuss our demands. He must come and see for himself" (personal communication, 14 June 2007).

Leitch (2003:56) states that many local and international activists from countries such as Palestine, India, Germany, USA, Norway, Italy, Canada, and Argentina showed solidarity with the WCAEC and visited the movement's office in Tafelsig. As a result of WCAEC militancy, the rate at which Cape Town evictions took place slowed down by December 2001 and effectively halted by June 2002. Many people who were evicted returned to their original homes by the MPAEC in March 2002 after they were moved to RDP houses that resembled dog kennels.

At first, despair and disbelief in a system that rendered them homeless have drawn many one-time homeowners of Mandela Park together for meetings in the area. One could hardly notice any feelings of antagonism or militancy because only a handful of families were affected and in any event, the ANC enjoyed great support in Mandela Park at that time (Alexander, 2004:62). However, the presence of union activists who had been fortified by years of struggle against the profit logic provided a particular spark to the order of events in Mandela Park (Leitch, 2003:57). Mandela Park would soon draw on the mobilising skills of these

unionists among their midst. Although the WCAEC contributed very minimally in terms of resources, the adrenalin injection to the Mandela Park residents came in the form of the existence of a strong mobilisation movement with its own rationale and language (Leitch, 2003:56).

According to Alexander (2004:64) the MPAEC opted to operate on two fronts namely starting a programme of mass mobilisation on the one hand, while initiating a legal defence through the courts, on the other. The movement managed to draw vital support from various sources including free-floating left activists, trade unionists and city-based NGO workers. By means of a series of well-attended gatherings, the WCAEC soon established itself in Mandela Park. A strong and vibrant antagonism resulted.

4.4 Mandela Park: Under State Assault

It is not only the Mandela Park community who were subjected to the repressive ferocity of the ANC State after more than a decade into democracy. Since the death of Michael Makhabane in early 2000 when poor students protested against their exclusion from the Durban Westville University, different authors have recorded several police-related killings in many parts of South Africa (Barnard & Farred, 2004:59).

In the course of this study, various reports were attested regarding violent clashes between law enforcement agencies and community activists, arrests of community activists by security forces and their subsequent arraignment in court. Moreover, there were several protests against the State's insistence to install prepaid water meters - a system that would force poor people to cut their own supply at the point of consumption because they cannot afford to pay. Every night, the clashes continue and there have been serious casualties and numerous arrests. Only last year, scores of heavily armed security personnel in armoured vehicles were dispatched into Tafelsig Township to enforce water disconnections which affected hundreds of people. Recently, the Tafelsig community weathered-off a less armed invasion, using stones and burning tyre barricades (Davids, 2007:2).

In late 1999, the Mandela Park community witnessed its first invasion by security forces in 'four-by-four' *bakkies*. Police officials began sealing off the doors of evicted households, throwing furniture and other items onto the streets and disconnecting water and electricity (Ntanyana, personal communication, 4 March 2007). Since then, Mandela Park residents have

been involved in a protracted resistance against evictions and water and electricity disconnections. The people have been engaged in revolutionary struggles and exposed themselves to dangers to resist exclusion from education; to retain access to basic services and to remain in the houses allocated by the apartheid regime (Davids, 2007:2). This quick and brutal crushing orchestrated by an ANC regime that was the dream and aspiration of the poor as they fought against apartheid was never anticipated, not even by the most cynical.

During the invasion of Mandela Park in late 1999, law enforcement agencies were armed with guns, dogs and teargas. They confiscated even the most meagre assets of the poor and evicted them from their houses. Mandela Park resembled a war zone with hundreds of security forces on the streets while police armoured tanks and support vehicles cordoned off certain streets and began evicting people from their houses one street at a time (Ntanyana, personal communication, 4 March 2007).

But as ANC security forces continued their assault on a poor and defenceless people, Mandela Park residents bravely stood up against the might of the State and began to return people to their houses. Violent clashes broke out between security personnel and community members. The entire community stood up and were supported by neighbouring townships in their struggles against evictions. The whole resistance evolved spontaneously out of sympathy with evicted neighbours, family members, friends, and in some cases, even complete strangers. The air was filled with teargas and police assaulted people with dogs, rubber bullets and batons and many people were rushed to hospital with injuries. In the end, only a group of thirteen people was evicted by the police on that day but the activists later returned most of them to their homes (Fonky, personal communication, 4 March 2007).

It was at this point that Mandela Park activists, with the help of some unionists among them, facilitated contact with the WCAEC in Tafelsig (Mackay, 2002:1). Together with the Anti-Privatisation Forum, they later forged links with the AEC in Mfuleni, Tambo Square, Delft, Gugulethu, Valhalla Park, Athlone and KTC. Thus, the MPAEC was born.

4.5 The revolt begins

Long-standing problems such as service disconnections and bank-promoted evictions prompted the formation of the Mandela Park Anti-Eviction Campaign in late 2000. The

construction of houses commenced in Mandela Park in 1986 and the first occupants moved in, in 1988 (Leitch, 2003:58). New occupants only had to pay a R500 deposit to get a house but before long, they discovered that their new houses had a range of problems and most of them were not complete units. Some of the houses had no ceiling, no plaster or ventilation holes, cracks, no ventilation, etc. The new houses each had only one entrance door and the court yards were very small since the banks constructed more than one house on a single plot. With the exception of a few houses whose owners reconstructed at their own expense, many of the initial construction problems still persist in the houses today. Residents decided to resume bond payments only once the construction deficits had been resolved by the banks (Ntanyana, personal communication, 4 March 2007).

In line with the general rent and service boycotts of the early 1990s, which was a key anti-apartheid strategy of the ANC, the residents of Mandela Park refused to pay their bonds. However, SANCO and the ANC later facilitated talks with the banks but these resulted in failure. Following the failure of the talks with the banks, a housing taskforce was formed which was made up of all the role players including SANCO, SACP and the ANC (Alexander 2004:65). Although the task force promised to redress the people's demands, the uncertainty about the amount payable on their bonds continued. The initial value of the houses was R25 000 but in many instances, the prices soared to R100 000 as a result of inflation. The taskforce decided that Mandela Park houses needed to be evaluated so it employed fieldworkers who were paid R2500 a month for the exercise. Many times SANCO would call a meeting to discuss the housing issue. Initially, the feedback meetings were scenes of heated exchanges between the various parties; eventually things calmed down but the interactive atmosphere of the meetings disappeared. In later meetings, no housing issue would be on the agenda when people arrived at meetings. People would soon become irritable and leave because only petty items were being discussed. When only a handful of people remained to agree or disagree, housing issues would be discussed under 'general items'. Eventually, the residents began boycotting these gatherings (Samuels, personal communication, 14 June 2007).

Again, many residents were instructed to pay their bonds with Khayelethu Home Loans (KHL) even though they had been paying for a long time at Standard bank or FNB bank. However, some others continued to pay to ABSA, African Bank, NEDCOR, FNB, Standard

bank and NBS. This also created some problems. A writing regarding the signing of a 'Joint Co-operation Agreement' between Khayelethu Home Loans and SANCO was distributed by the two parties in 1996. It obliged all residents to pay their bonds or face legal action. It was later revealed that SANCO's signed the agreement with KHL because it had accepted a 20% stake in the company (Fonky, personal communication, 4 March 2007). And so the watchdog organisation of the poor, initially established to strengthen the voice of the poor, became swallowed by the logic of profit and it turned its back on the people it was supposed to represent by becoming a part of the bank itself.

In 1994 the new ANC government signed a 'memorandum of understanding' with the commercial banks (Leitch, 2003:60). This move resulted in the formation of SERVCON in 1995 to address the 'historical problems' of arrears and incomplete housing in Mandela Park and it was jointly owned by both the banks and the government. In accordance with the SERVCON agreement, people were offered four options namely evictions, buybacks, rental or right-sizing. The community opposed all these options since they favoured only the banks but SERVCON maintained that people would be evicted if they refused to find methods to pay. Meanwhile, what the banks demanded was impossible for the poor to meet since the situation was complicated by arrears that have built up over the years. In addition, the houses originally cost R25 000 but the value had become inflated by high interest rates in recent years.

Ward councillors of the ANC joined the housing talks shortly after the first evictions of September 1999 and promised the resolution of the housing issue on the condition that residents pay their bonds. However, residents felt that even the ward councillors were not listening to their complaints. The ward councillors organised small workshops attended only by SANCO officials and a handful of other individuals. Deliberations revolved around the SERVCON briefing document of March 1998 which states that the disabled and the elderly should not be relocated therefore, the workshops targeted vulnerable people such as single mothers, the disabled and pensioners in Mandela Park, many of who got 'right-sized' or evicted. Representatives of the ANC alliance intimidated the councillors and this resulted in low votes for the ANC during the 2000 local government elections in Khayelitsha (Ntanyana, personal communication, 4 March 2007).

According to Alexander (2004:67), evictions started in earnest during the period following the local government elections in 2000. People became confused and demotivated, unwilling to engage in endless resistance. About 190 households were evicted as ANC security forces continued to relocate residents to remote areas such as Makhaza or Harare, far away from Mandela Park (Alexander, 2004:67). By 2001, security personnel evicted more than thirty families in a single day. Many Mandela Park residents witnessed their houses going under the hammer as commercial banks auctioned them even before families could be re-allocated to smaller RDP houses. In some instances, banks continued to demand payment on the original bonds irrespective of whether the people had been 'right-sized' or evicted.

On 8 July 2002 security police began to confiscate poor people's property and disconnecting electricity and water. As security personnel moved from one dwelling to the other, they barged into a house of a woman whose water bill was R800 in arrears. They wanted to repossess her furniture but on entering the house, the only items found were some old clothes and a torn mattress on the floor. They took all the clothes. Mandela Park residents clashed with the police and began to protest outside on the streets. Rubber bullets and teargas flew all over the streets. In one incident a rubber bullet penetrated a broken window and hit a three month-old infant on his bed. He died instantly. Ten arrests were made and many others were detained overnight in police custody at Khayelitsha and elsewhere. They were humiliated, cursed, called *kaffirs* and denied medical treatment for injuries (Zabalaza, personal communication, 15 April 2007).

Subsequently, the MPAEC decided to expand its focus beyond the housing issue. Poor people simply cannot afford service payments no matter how hard they try and that is the reason they are behind in payments. Based on this realisation, a flat rate service charge of R10 a month per family, payable to the council, was advocated by the MPAEC. In this regard, MPAEC members staged a sit-in protest at the Khayelitsha Municipal offices in April 2002 and demanded an end to service disconnections as well as a R10 per month service charge. In the meantime, the Municipal Council also promised to re-install the electricity meters that they removed after MPAEC members marched to their offices in November 2002. As municipal official Phumzile Mbete explains:

“People are experiencing the same problems with regard to electricity. These problems are also being taken care of by the MPAEC. People can simply not afford to pay and they build up arrears. The MPAEC then popularised a call for a flat rate service charge of R10 a month and members started paying just that amount. This happened during a sit-in at the Khayelitsha Municipal offices organised by the MPAEC in protest against service cut-offs. The council also agreed in August 2002 to install the electricity boxes that were taken out by them. People were returned to their original houses from March 2002” (personal communication, 14 June 2007)

After the NNP/ANC coalition government assumed power in Cape Town in 2001, the MPAEC continued to write to the Ministry of Housing and the banks (Leitch, 2003:61). When they got no positive response, the people further launched direct actions. A sit-in protest at the NBS in the Cape Town city centre by some 250 MPAEC members followed on 30 May 2002 to complain about the ‘right-sizing’ of vulnerable people. The majority of the people who participated in the sit-in action were to be evicted in the week that followed. They were to repay their bonds at a rate of R500 per month and their situation was quite desperate as their only income was their pension of R540 a month. Other complaints revolved around the fact that occupants had to repair cracks, faulty electrical wiring, and leaking roofs and fit ceilings at their own expense. The small sizes of the plots and the re-sale of Mandela Park land to the government were also among issues that were raised (Leitch, 2003:60).

Some 200 MPEAC members staged another sit-in protest at the KHL offices on 12 June 2002. During this protest, the MPAEC showed video footage of their struggles against evictions and the conditions of the houses to the manager of KHL. They demanded the reduction of house prices as well as the scrapping of arrears. Although KHL agreed to end the eviction of the disabled and the elderly and to scrap the arrears, most other commercial banks continued to charge people for arrears (Fonky, personal communication, 4 March 2007).

In a move that was largely regarded as an attempt to stop poor people from defending themselves against State oppression, commercial banks secured a court interdict against the MPAEC (Leitch, 2003:62). Because of the severe scarcity of funds to launch a legal defence, the interdict went unopposed. The terms of the interdict restrained the respondents from

encouraging or inducing any person to occupy property and from directly or indirectly preventing evictions. Following the interdict, many MPAEC activists were detained and incarcerated without trial for lengthy periods in various South African jails.

Since the inception of the Western Cape ANC/NNP coalition government in 2001, provincial Housing Minister, Nomatyala Hlangana received numerous letters from the MPAEC inviting her to visit the area and to discuss the housing issue with the banks and SERVCON (Leitch, 2003:61). She declined.

“What the MPAEC wanted from the government was that they should pay a subsidy to people in Mandela Park and elsewhere buying houses for the first time (sic) and to buy back the land on which Mandela Park is constructed in order to develop it. This expectation was however a reasonable one – that low-income group housing be subsidized by the state” (Samuels, personal communication, 14 June 2007).

In mid-2002, scores of MPAEC activists marched to the Ministry of Housing in the Cape Town city centre. They demanded to be addressed by Nomatyala Hlangana, the provincial MEC for Housing. Nomatyala disappeared and instead, MPAEC supporters were informed that the Managing Director of SERVCON would address them. Meanwhile a police contingency was dispatched to the scene and it cordoned off the area, used teargas and batons to disperse the crowd and made numerous arrests. Among the detainees were children and pensioners. Many of them were later released on condition that they would never show up at the ministry again. MPAEC activist, Goboza Fonky explains that:

“Nomatyala Hlangana, the Western Cape MEC for Housing have (sic) received numerous letters from us. We have invited her to Mandela Park but our invitations have been turned down by her office. A delegation of MPAEC activists were dispatched to Radio Zibonele on Wednesday 4 July, because we learned from reliable sources she would be interviewed that night. She was on the air with a few of us and accepted our invitation to talk to the MPAEC but later refused to meet with us. However she decided to arrange a meeting in Mandela Park only with the ANC, SACP, COSATU, and SANCO. She said the majority of people can’t think and it is them (the organisations) who knew everything (sic). We disagreed because

everybody can think. Hundreds of MPAEC supporters marched to her office in Whale Street as a result of her exclusion of the real affected people (sic) from attending the meeting she had with the organisations. Officials told us that SERVCON's Managing Director would address us. Instead, the building got surrounded by police who (sic) dispersed us with teargas and arrested 44 of us" (personal communication, 4 March 2007).

Moreover, the National Department of Housing dispatched a delegation to Mandela Park in mid-2002 (WCAEC, 2003b:01). The delegation attended the two-weekly gathering of the MPAEC in Khayelitsha and promised to discuss the people's complaints with the national ministry. This promise never materialised since no word was ever heard from the National Housing office again. Most people evicted from their houses in Mandela Park were 'right-sized' to Makhaza. But the banks got more clever and smarter. They contracted private security companies to carry out surveillance work on the MPAEC and to guard vacant houses. Undercover policemen would often attend MPAEC meetings in civilian clothing and monitor and infiltrate the movement (WCAEC, 2003b:1).

Later in 2002, a group of ANC ward councillors gained forceful entry and destroyed the doors of homes of people that were 'right-sized' to Makhaza and evicted them from their houses. MPAEC activists alerted the police and several arrests followed but suddenly all charges against the councillors were thrown out. Some activists allege that the councillors were paid by their friends to allocate those houses to them (Zabalaza, personal communication, 15th April 2007).

According to Kistner (2002:103), the MPAEC and the APF held a rally on 26 October 2002, the same day on which the ANC held a rally in Khayelitsha. The MPAEC could only afford six buses to transport people but the gathering was attended by more than 6000 people. The ANC on the other hand, forked out a lot of money for twelve buses with loudspeakers and had the popular Jacob Zuma as the main speaker but only few people attended. The zero attendance at the ANC rally made national headlines on television news that night. The ANC blamed it on the soccer game played between Sundown and Pirates on that day but failed to acknowledge the massive attendance at the MPAEC and APF rally. Max Ntanyana comments thus:

“You see, party politics is one thing that people are not interested in. Real ‘bread and butter’ politics is what the people want. Every day we are getting stronger and stronger. It seems as if the authorities have a continuous programme to harass us, especially after we were arrested” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

And so the activities of the MPAEC and the events that unfolded on 26 October 2002 facilitated the final nail into the coffin of the SACP-ANC establishment in Mandela Park.

The MPAEC enjoyed positive coverage on television and with the press in general, until this point. However, this favourable media coverage ended on 8 November 2002 with a headline on the front page of the Cape Times captioned, ‘Home Owners now Targeted by Champions of the Poor’. Another headline on the same page read, ‘Felicia’s Title Deeds not a Deterrent to Eviction Bullies’ (Sanders, 2002:1).

The article painted a negative picture of the AEC as becoming ‘evictors’ themselves (Sanders, 2002:1). The report lashed out at the MPAEC and accused them of acting like representatives of government by evicting people and allocating houses to others and stated that Lennit Max, the Western Cape Police Commissioner, was instructed by Leonard Ramatlakane to come down hard on the organisation and to restore order to Khayelitsha (2002:1). Nevertheless, Risimati Shivuri, the Khayelitsha police commissioner disagrees:

“What is needed in Khayelitsha is political intervention; arrests will not solve the problem. In terms of listening to the people and negotiating with them, this political intervention never materialised until this day (sic)” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

A domestic worker, Felicia Petani, is the person mentioned in the second headline (Sanders, 2002:1). Her instant popularity arose from the fact that she held the title deeds to a house in Mandela Park, which was bought from the banks by Tanja Truscott, her employer. The bank had re-possessed the house and sold it to her employer but the MPAEC returned the former owner to the house. According to Tanja Truscott, the previous owner of the house had applied in 1991 to be ‘right-sized’ by the banks. But Ntanyana disagrees with Truscott:

“The fact of the matter is that the idea of ‘right-sizing’ was not even existent in 1991 and nobody was ‘right-sized’ then! It was not until 1999 that the first evictions took place in Mandela Park and ‘right-sizing’ only happened in 2001” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

Tanja Truscott also claimed that the house was empty for many years before she bought it (Sanders, 2002:1). This claim is also refuted:

“If Tanja Truscott only knew Khayelitsha she would be aware that no house will stand empty (sic) for ten years and not be vandalised in this township, the story can simply not be true. However, the truth is that the MPAEC returned the original owner to his house after being evicted for ten weeks only and not ten years” (Ntanyana, personal communication, 17 April 2007).

The MPAEC also denied Tanja Truscott’s claim that people were evicted momentarily without prior notice by the MPAEC and that that was not the case even with Felicia. They claimed that they assisted new owners to find alternative accommodation after they have agreed to move out and that nobody was evicted without being given an alternative place to stay. MPAEC activist, Goboza Fonky explains this point:

“In most instances, the banks decided to sell-off these houses mercilessly and without consideration, so that they could ensure title deeds for the new occupants. We wanted the evicted families to return to their original houses, so we approached the new owners (some of them even soldiers and police men) and they agreed to move out. With the assistance of other MPAEC activists, these people were relocated to other vacant houses that were sometimes protected by private security companies contracted by the banks. Alternative accommodation was given to everyone, and not a single family was left without a place to stay” (personal communication, 4 March 2007).

Whatever the merits of the case, SERVCON’s decision to sell-off houses that were still under dispute to new owners remains unethical and irresponsible.

The MPAEC called a mass meeting in Mandela Park on 8 December 2002 that was attended by both SANCO and the local councillors (Leitch, 2003:62). Leonard Ramatlakane who also attended the meeting, refused to talk when the people demanded to be addressed by him. The people became angry and started throwing chairs while Councillor Mbongeni Ngombane accused the MPAEC of high-jacking the meeting and claimed that the Mandela Park residents wanted to resume their bond payments. The meeting was postponed to an alternative venue outside Mandela Park but only a handful of people, including Ramatlakane, the councillors and their allies attended the meeting. Meanwhile, outside the venue, hundreds of MPAEC activists chanted slogans and ‘toy-toyed’² in protest against the ANC and its leadership. Ramatlakane decided to use strong-arm tactics. He condemned the MPAEC for simply showing up at the houses of new owners, instructing them to leave and calling for the arrest of such individuals and the protection of people with title deeds.

What the MPAEC found disturbing was the fact that the SACP, COSATU, the ANC and SANCO were embraced and acknowledged by communities in the face of government’s unwillingness to engage them in dialogue. The MPAEC viewed these organisations as being on the side of the banks and as having no concern in the matter. They believe that both the SACP and COSATU were supposed to be actively supporting the community struggles but they refused to. The fact that they are in alliance with government does not give them legitimacy to attend these community meetings; their attendance at such meetings appear to be only in support of government and the banks. SANCO on the other hand should also not attend these community meetings since they are on the side of the banks as a result of their shareholding in KHL.

4.6 The Quest for Education

In an attempt to reach beyond defensive battles, the MPAEC took a bold initiative to open a community run school. The People’s Power Secondary School was launched by the MPAEC in January 2003 and consisted mainly of pupils who were turned away from other schools for various reasons including issues pertaining to school-going age, school fees and failure of

² ‘Toy-toy’ is a South African term for a non-violent march accompanied by freedom songs and chants.

examinations. The school recruited twenty-eight unemployed teachers on a voluntary basis during its first year of existence and enrolled 1800 learners from all over Khayelitsha. In February 2003, the MPAEC engaged in several talks with the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) over the registration of the school (Mc Farlane, 2003:1).

According to McFarlane (2003:1), many South African learners were excluded from public schools because of issues relating to school uniform, transportation and school fees. He comments further that such creative community initiatives must not be undermined but rather, unleashed, tapped and encouraged.

The acting director of the Education Policy Unit at Witwatersrand University, Salim Vally, stated that many South African learners' rights are being violated on a daily basis throughout the country because of the State's continued review of South Africa's education finance policies. The Education Rights Project (ERP) described the Khayelitsha initiative as a striking demand for justice and encouraged people to take the initiative in addressing the country's backlog in schools.

As negotiations with the WCED to register the school became more and more protracted, the MPAEC decided to step up its pressure on the institution. Hundreds of students organised by the MPAEC marched to the offices of the WCED in Kuils River in May 2003 in a mass demonstration outside the WCED building. As a consequence, the WCED initially decided to allow the school. However, the WCED officials suddenly changed their minds in August 2003, closed down the school and refused its registration. The volunteer teachers were refused employment and most of the learners were not granted admission to other public schools except for eight primary school students who were absorbed by a neighbouring school. In spite having met all the registration requirements, the WCED proceeded with the closing of the school and all the learners were forced to sit at home (Ndabazandile, personal communication, 17 April 2007).

Chris Ndabazandile also accused the ANC of playing unconstitutional games with them and that the reason the school was closed down was because the ANC did not want it. Ndabazandile was abducted by security officials in September 2003 and held in custody at a

police station in Side B. During his custody, he was called a '*kaffir*' and was racially abused (Ndabazandile, personal communication, 17 April 2007).

Similarly, a week after the closure of the People's Power Secondary School by the WCED, a group of five MPAEC activists including Max Ntanyana, the chairperson of the MPAEC, were arrested for breaking their bail conditions and for intimidation (Leitch, 2003:63). Minutes after an MPAEC meeting, a black car without number plates had stopped outside Ntanyana's house and three men in civil uniform jumped out of it and abducted Ntanyana. . The MPAEC believed the police used Ntanyana as a scapegoat. Ntanyana was detained for several months at Pollsmoor prison and was released on strict apartheid-style bail conditions. The MPAEC referred the issue to the Freedom of Expression Institute as they regarded the bail conditions as unconstitutional. The MPAEC believed the arrests came were due to the positive image the school enjoyed in the media. Lennit Max, Western Cape Police Commissioner later admitted that undercover police officials infiltrated the regular Sunday gatherings of the MPAEC and monitored these proceedings (Leitch, 2003:63).

4.7 Resistance and State Repression

Both SANCO and ANC leaders had been accorded much deference in the years immediately following 1994. They made promises of a 'better life for all' and carried the mystique of liberation fighters. Nevertheless, the repressive responses to community struggles in addition to the magnitude of false and unkept promises made by the ANC would eventually facilitate the active erosion of the deference and ultimately give rise to what Miliband (1978:16) refers to as 'desubordination'.

Needless to say, the ANC's disregard for the MPAEC offended many people and the bank-enforced evictions and police harassment of MPAEC activists caused a great deal of outrage within the local community. Because of the refusal of both the banks and government to view the overtures of the community in a serious light, the MPAEC realised that they had to set a series of more militant actions in motion (Leitch, 2003:63). Thus, fertile grounds were laid for increased mass mobilisation and militancy.

Some activists proposed the burning down of houses that were re-posessed by the banks (Leitch,, 2003:63). The MPAEC decided to put the proposal up for debate and called a range

of public gatherings with the Mandela Park community. An entirely new strategy was born out of these debates. According to activists, the burning down of re-possessed houses would be a simultaneous admission of defeat and would be an obviously super-militant strategy. Instead, activists decided to employ a more positive tactic by returning evicted families to their original houses. The MPAEC thereafter adopted a provocative chant that soon echoed all over Mandela Park namely “Seize our homes – seize our lives.” This slogan has earned MPAEC members the ferocity of the ANC Government since it inspired people all over Khayelitsha and became quite widespread throughout the country.

In another development, SAMWU shop steward, Max Ntanyana worked at sewerage farm outside Khayelitsha. He was at the forefront of a strike against privatization at his workplace in September 2002. About twenty employees, including Ntanyana, were arrested and held in police custody in Somerset West. By then, Ntanyana had become a household name in the Khayelitsha courtroom. A police official seated at the back of the courtroom openly stated that the MPAEC was the enemy of the State. Meanwhile, the word ‘terrorist’ was also got increasingly used by security personnel and in media circles when referring to the MPAEC and its activists. Ntanyana was subsequently charged with contempt of court and intimidation, accused of continuing his activities with MPAEC. He was incarcerated at Pollsmoor prison and fired from his job since an interdict prohibiting him from engaging in MPAEC activities was still in force (Ntanyana, personal communication, 17 April 2007).

On 9 September 2003 the courts released all the other workers that were in police holding cells but Ntanyana was imprisoned at the Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison (Leitch 2003: 64). In the aftermath of the September 2003 arrests security police continued their crackdown on the MPAEC and arrested Goboza Fonky two weeks after. He was kept in police custody in Khayelitsha and released on a bail of R500. MPAEC chairperson, Max Ntanyana recalls:

“The time in Pollsmoor was tough and terrible. You already expect to be a robbery victim once you had a visitor (sic). Inmates are often sodomised; prisoners fight and the warders won’t look after you. Phone calls are limited to once a week only. There are, however, other inmates who value and respect the work of the MPAEC. And this is how we make it through the day. The community supports us tremendously since the court is always packed when we have to appear (sic). At one court appearance, authorities wanted to avoid the community and made me appear over lunchtime. The prosecutor wanted to refuse me bail and said my lawyer

was not present. He ordered me to return to court the next day, but I knew my lawyer was there and that they tried to hide me from the community so that I could not see them (sic). But the community was there, in their hundreds, singing and protesting outside and inside the court. There were a lot of undercover police, working for the banks. They told me about how the evictions and disconnections affected other police also and that I would not be released on bail (sic). Support was pouring in (sic) from all over the world including Germany, America, Italy, Canada and Argentine. I stopped being worried since I was very enlightened and empowered by the support. In fact the arrests and the crack down on social movements diverted my worries from myself unto the movement and the community. We were released on strict bail conditions” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

The interfaces between repression and resistance gained momentum and the rhythms of contestation became faster. On 31 July 2003 three families were evicted from their houses when the sheriffs descended to the community under heavy police escort. Meanwhile, the week before that, the police and the sheriffs evicted a total of seven households in Illitha Park in only one street. The MPAEC returned all these families to their houses on the same day they were evicted. On 7 August 2003 another group of families was evicted by the sheriffs but again, in all these cases, the MPAEC reversed the evictions the same day (Zabalaza, personal communication, 15 April 2007).

In the aftermath of the August 2003 evictions, several incidents occurred. Mandela Park’s young men decided to strike back and started targeting delivery vans and stoning police vehicles on Khayelitsha’s streets. However, the police was not deterred by this display of rage. Again, a woman, who owed the council water bill, lost all her possessions when police re-possessed her belongings only a week after the stoning of commercial vehicles in Mandela Park. The police also targeted, disrupted and dispersed MPAEC’s regular Sunday (Fonky, personal communication, 4 March 2007). The pressure of that period was spelt out in an MPAEC press statement dated 28 September 2003:

“The police repression is ongoing. Six of our comrades remain incarcerated since 12 June 2003 for illegally occupying houses. The MPAEC must foot a legal bill of R2500 for hiring a lawyer to defend these comrades. It is anticipated that the legal bill will increase sharply in the near future and the next court appearance is tomorrow. In order to pay these bills, the MPAEC has set up a legal defence fund as well as a bail fund and is desperately asking for

donations. It is also anticipated that pressure on the MPAEC will intensify as the 2004 elections draw closer. The ANC is always banking on Khayelitsha votes because the Western Cape is a strongly contested province. To ensure that their support base remains intact, they would want to eliminate the MPAEC and opposition social movements” (WCAEC, 2003a:1).

The repression and marginalisation of community movements continued unabated. Sanki Mthembi-Makhanyele, Deputy Secretary General of the ANC, responded to a question regarding the MPAEC at a Socio-Economic Rights Conference in August 2003. He stated that South Africa could not afford behaviours similar to those of societies that have been independent for many years because our democracy is very young and he therefore expects the people to move in the same direction. He also mentioned that the State would differentiate between problematic and positive social formations (Barnard & Farred, 2004:62). Meanwhile, David Makhura, the General Secretary of the Gauteng ANC, launched a direct attack on social movements in the same week and branded them as ‘ultra-revolutionaries’ who oppose evictions and disconnections. He went on with his attack on social formations and stated that, “Si zo ba bethwa!” (We will hit them); (Barnard & Farred, 2004:62).

4.8 Year of Action

The following represents the content of a leaflet, which was circulated in January 2004 by the MPAEC at railway stations and taxi ranks throughout Khayelitsha (Barnard & Farred, 2004:63).

"The African National Congress has governed the country for more than a decade promising a better life for all. Instead, the working class have (sic) been exploited for the advancement of private sector profit. A lot of black elites have joined the rich man's club and became (sic) instant millionaires. But between 1996 and 2000, black African people's average income has dropped from R32000 to R26000. According to a recent study, half of Khayelitsha's households are subjected to starvation level poverty (sic) since they survive on less than R167 a month. The ANC initially promised free and compulsory education but learners are refused schooling and others are forced to pay unaffordable amounts as school fees. School principals need to exempt poor families from school fees and should not act as gatekeepers (sic).

There is not a single trace of the 'decent housing for all', promised by the ANC – instead the country is experiencing a big housing backlog. An amount of R337 million earmarked for housing delivery in the Western Cape could not be spend (sic) and was returned to treasury in November 2003. On 29 January the MPAEC will be meeting with the Western Cape Housing MEC to discuss the issue of housing subsidies. The 50kw free electricity promised by the ANC for so long have (sic) at last reached our people. This was partly because of the mobilisation of the MPAEC and its antagonism towards (sic) the electricity company Phambili Nambane. Under the ANC government, the economy shed more than one million jobs (sic). And in Shoprite and Score supermarkets, only those with ANC connections get hired (sic). The distribution of jobs must be done in a fair manner.

Thabo Mbeki now admits there are problems because the elections are around the corner. He is again making promises about a social contract with the people and is promising more delivery. This is in actual terms an invitation to assist him in maximising private sector profitability and capitalism. The SANCO leaders, the councillors and the local ANC have repressed and harassed us while the national ANC government kept quiet (sic). The eviction of people by SERVCON must be stopped! The bail conditions of some are reminiscent of the apartheid era; they are under house arrest and are not allowed to attend public meetings. There is no free political activity in South Africa and our constitutional rights have been violated.

It is only the interest of capitalism and the rich that is being served by this ANC government (sic). There is no policy being put forward by political parties that are in the interest of the poor. Therefore we see no meaning for us in the forthcoming provincial and national elections. The MPAEC herewith encourages its supporters to refrain from participating in the forthcoming elections only to enhance capitalism's democracy.

The year 2004 is a year of action for us in the MPAEC and we will broaden our struggle:

- *For democratic, human, and socio-economic rights!*
- *For dropping all charges and bail conditions!*
- *For an end to arrests and police harassment!*

- *For a flat rate service charge of R10!*
- *For enforcing the 6kl free water promised by the ANC!*
- *To resist all electricity and water cut-offs as well as evictions!*

Add your demands by attending our bi-weekly meetings at 19H00 (Wednesdays) and 14H00 (Sundays) in the Andile Nhose Centre.

Phambili socialism! Phambili the AEC! (Forward with socialism, Forward with the AEC)

Phantsi capitalism! Phantsi the banks! (Down with capitalism, down with the banks)''

Conclusion

Most of South Africa's new social movements (and the poor who make-up those movements) have, unsurprisingly, exhibited little desire to be part of the institutionalised mainstream South African politics. This is precisely because these movements have been born out of the very failures and betrayals of South Africa's main political 'currents' and the institutional democratic framework that give them contemporary legitimacy. In many poor urban and rural communities, it is through the activities of new social movements that an increasing number of people experience and practise meaningful democracy. Indeed, it is no co-incidence that the growing impact and popularity of the daily 'bread and butter' issues and struggles taken up by the social movements, are directly linked to the adverse effects of the ANC State's neo-liberal policies on the poor majority that are most acutely experienced through the 'offices' of the various institutional mechanisms of representative democracy.

The fact that most social movements are presently outside the mainstream of South Africa's institutional political framework is representative of a reality that the ANC State and its allies appear wholly unwilling to face - that is, that an increasing number of poor South Africans no longer see active participation in the present institutional set-up of representative democracy as being in their political and/or socio-economic interests.

CHAPTER 5 - Research Findings and Analysis

Introduction

This section summarises the narrative of the conflict that has characterised the relationship between the State and community-based social movements resisting the effects of neo-liberalism. The first part of this chapter attempts to chart the contours of the State's response to new social movements in relation to the country's macro-economic framework. The next section identifies the points of contact between the State and community movements in relation to the demands made by movements, and the State's response to these demands. From this point, an analysis of the effects of the conflict on the relationship between the State and communities in struggle is provided, as well as the possible consequences of the current trajectory. The final part examines the ways in which the conflict has affected the communities and the movements themselves and also details the research findings.

5.1 Managing Dissent through Public-Private-Partnerships

In Mandela Park, the various arms of national and local government have formed an important collaborative pact consisting of the private sector (e.g. corporate land-owners, banks and private security firms), the judiciary, intelligence services, police, government parastatals, local sub-contractors, housing departments etc. This strategic approach points towards important developments on how the activities of social movements will be controlled by the State in the future. In Mandela Park, a township, where conflict levels have skyrocketed, the shape of the Public Private Partnerships (PPP) became particularly significant for the ANC State.

Between 2002 and 2003, a strategic partnership was built against the MPAEC in Mandela Park. While a sizeable section of the community engaged in ongoing resistance on evictions, a collaborative pact consisting of representatives of private banks, SERVCON, local police and the State prosecutor was formed. SANCO chairperson, Sidaki Thembalihle explains that:

“There was a regular monthly meeting between key players namely the councillors, attorneys acting on behalf of the banks, the police, and SERVCON, because the issue only escalated further and further” (personal communication, 14 April 2007).

The study discovered that the MPAEC was both monitored and infiltrated by this PPP ‘pact’. The police superintendent in Khayelitsha also admitted that MPAEC meetings were regularly attended by undercover policemen in civilian clothing.

From the minutes of its meetings between 2003 and April 2004, it has been established that SERVCON has maintained contact with the office of the state prosecutor. In these minutes, numerous discussions were held with the local prosecutor regarding criminal cases before the Khayelitsha court. The minutes also indicate that the prosecutor’s office gave SERVCON the undertaking that they would first consult them before withdrawing any case against the MPAEC. Minutes of another meeting also showed that SERVCON was in possession of classified information regarding MPAEC plans and deliberations. A private security firm based in Khayelitsha was contracted by SERVCON to collect intelligence reports and carry out surveillance against MPAEC activists and their activities. Even ordinary members of the community were recruited and put on SERVCON’s payroll to spy and report on their neighbours.

It is clear that the notion of the ‘independence of the judiciary’ is greatly undermined in the light of these revelations about the form and nature of these partnerships. Moreover, the ANC’s refusal to engage in dialogue with social movements resulted in irregularities. Meanwhile, social movements became increasingly antagonistic as the ANC continued the deployment of its repressive apparatus against them.

5.2 The Rule of Law

Engagements between the State and communities have been characterised by high levels of conflict. This was mostly because of the government’s refusal to negotiate with civil society about its economic policy. This reality is reflected in the government’s response against communities that resisted the effects of GEAR. Moreover, the focus of social movement

antagonism was primarily aimed at State service providers, the council, the banks and the police.

Meanwhile, community perceptions regarding the State's response to resistance have been profoundly influenced by the government's hiring of private security companies. In many cases, the metro police and the public order policing unit presided over the protests in Mandela Park. However, as indicated in this study, many cost recovery operations and large-scale evictions that anticipated strong community resistance increasingly utilised specialised private security companies. The emergence of the private sector in state-community relations dramatically reshaped the character of conflict as demonstrated by the bank's efforts to prevent evicted people from being returned to their original houses by appointing private security companies to safeguard property.

Serious questions are being asked concerning the prioritisation of private sector profitability versus the status of citizen's political and civil rights because of the increasing involvement of 'business' in the management of community protest and resistance. The conflict in Mandela Park was also influenced by the important role that the courts played. Often, the courts have taken disciplinary actions against social movements but occasionally, the movements have been able to seek relief through the courts. Moreover, the courts and the judiciary as a whole have presided over the plethora of charges brought against MPAEC activists in Mandela Park, the prosecution of trespassers and the granting of interdicts and eviction orders.

It has also been reported that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) gathers information pertaining to social movement activities (WCAEC, 2003a:1). NIA's activities ranged from accusations of intimidation and harassment to accusations of interrogation to obtain information. The head of the information centre at the NIA, Jackie McKay, did not want to admit openly that social movements were targeted by the NIA. He however admitted that in the event of organised social movement activity, the NIA pays close attention to individuals involved since such activities could create the impression of being oppositional to the law. He revealed that the potential for unrest as a consequence of social movement activity is currently the one factor that threatens national security the most. He denied that the work of the NIA included the daily surveillance and monitoring of community movements but suggested that

the NIA often forwarded information collected for policy purposes to national government (Jackie McKay, personal communication, 4 March, 2007).

In the course of the conflict between the State and the community over the effects of the ANC's macro-economic path, the structures of the ANC alliance contributed immensely to the maintenance of the present *status quo* as demonstrated by the Mandela Park situation. According to Fikile Ngombane, an ANC ward councillor, the ANC launched a branch of SANCO in Mandela Park, which served as an effective measure to control the mass action in the township:

"The people did not want any other structure in Mandela Park apart from the MPAEC. We however pushed through and established a SANCO branch in the area, as it did not exist before. So SANCO was launched and has called mass meetings on every Sunday, which was very well attended (sic). This serves as an effective weapon against the MPAEC" (personal communication, 14 April 2007).

In Mandela Park, a fatal re-making of the nature of community conflict occurred as alternative movements organised by the State such as SANCO facilitated real conflict and direct competition amongst local alliance structures and social movements. And in the State-community conflict in Mandela Park, an important mini turf-war between alliance structures and social movements occurred.

5.3 The Effects of Conflict

Both social movements and communities have experienced far-reaching consequences from the ongoing State-community conflict. The perception of communities on South Africa's new democracy, the State and social movements has dramatically changed since the beginning of the conflict and the resultant State repression that has often accompanied it. Although it cannot be compared to the apartheid period, the resurgence of political conflict holds far-reaching implications for already traumatised communities such as Mandela Park while intensifying the traumatisation and alienation of the most marginalised sections of society.

The ability of the State to effectively deliver other relevant services such as community policing, repairs on council property etc, have been handicapped by the effects of the

ongoing conflict in Mandela Park. Police Superintendent Vosloo expresses his frustration over the challenges that the Khayelitsha police faces:

“I am of the opinion that the police can never be the solution to this problem. In addressing this, the councillors and those other role players must play a much bigger role. If they want to evict people, issue notices, or even to protect the sheriff, they call upon us to do that. The people being illegally in the houses (sic) immediately see us as the immediate threat and begin fighting with us. This poses an immense problem for us because policing and crime prevention is in a broad sense determined by our ability to earn the trust of the community. Then the real kind of tasks that we were supposed to perform like (sic) robberies, rapes, and murders becomes (sic) difficult and problematic since we have lost their trust.

It’s a situation of taking one step forward and two steps backward. Today, we sit around the table and talk to them but tomorrow we come and fight. It is really frustrating because these are our communities, our friends and families... and we understand their frustration. And then comes the physical confrontation and we must throw our teargas and shoot our rubber bullets and stunt grenades. In the end, we must ensure that the court order is carried out. There is then a failure on the part of the people to actually understand all of this because we were on speaking terms with them only the day before but today we are fighting” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

Throughout the country, parastatal and council officials are escorted by heavily armed security forces when entering these volatile neighbourhoods. And there have been a number of police related deaths and shooting incidents, during the execution of these cost recovery operations. Meanwhile, the ability of the State to intervene positively in the lives of its citizens is seriously undermined by such incidents while the gap between the State and its citizens continues to widen.

Social movements have also experienced the negative effects of the conflict and repression. The organisational form of the MPAEC in Mandela Park has been severely restructured as a result of its decision to employ confrontational tactics that fuelled the escalation of the conflict. The MPAEC has adopted the ‘moving back of evicted families to their homes’, as its

principal strategy. However, a high level of ongoing mobilisation was required by this strategy as it effectively rendered large numbers of people vulnerable to prosecution. On the other hand, the State also had to ensure that other communities facing similar challenges do not follow the Mandela Park route. A SERVCON member, Martin Bungu explains further:

“In fact, the MPAEC currently employs a defensive strategy and most of their energies (sic) have been occupied by these court cases over the last three years or so. They’ve not been thinking ahead of issues and have been fighting reactive battles” (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

The perception of social movements regarding organisational cohesiveness and priorities has also changed as a result of the high levels of conflict and repression. The particular priorities and constraints of the conflictual context have shaped the forms of organisational reproduction. The mobilisation of resources to defend the legal battles of its activists as a result of the State’s ongoing crackdown on the activists has almost exclusively captured the focus of the MPAEC. This reality was increasingly reflected in the press statements and mobilisations of the MPAEC. As a result, the MPAEC experienced a deficit in the vital activities necessary for strategic direction and sustained mobilisation. Instead of extending its membership base and assuming greater political space within the community, the MPAEC’s strategic thrust was captured by the legal defence of its members from Ramatlakane’s law and order crackdown.

The *modus operandi* of a movement as well as the nature of people involved is, to a large extent, determined by its choice of tactics. For instance, to block out the possibility of being infiltrated by spies, movements that employ direct violent confrontation as a strategy would most likely be controlled and steered by a small number of trusted individuals. There would most likely also be an alteration in terms of the positions and responsibilities held by members of the core group. The position of women in social movements is of particular relevance here. And in contexts characterised by high levels of violence and conflict, this problem can even be more exacerbated and more common. The role of women becomes increasingly secondary while those of men are jealously protected and highly regarded. The common threat of re-possession has however acted as the central catalyst in the formation of

inter-provincial networks between social movements. Both nationally and internationally, individual movements managed to access the greatest level of practical solidarity in this area (Alexander, 2004:67).

In another important development, national discussions focussing on the development of systems for mutual assistance as well as the development of strategies to deal with the effects of repression have begun to take place amongst social movements across provinces (Alexander, 2004:67).

5.4 Research Finding

The above summary of the development and outcomes of the MPAEC has confirmed the hypothesis of this study. Community organizations like the MPAEC can make a significant contribution to community empowerment by mobilizing and articulating the voices of the poor and vulnerable groups in society to resist the State's hegemony with regards to service cut-offs and household evictions.

Conclusion

The resurgence of popular grassroots organisations in the form of new social movements since 1994 has profoundly altered not only the political landscape of South Africa but relations within civil society in general. As this research demonstrates, the antagonism between the state and social movements, a direct result of the adoption of neo-liberal strategies and policies, has led to increasing levels of conflict around basic socio-economic issues. The return of such conflict in the context of a society that has historically experienced the trauma of politically motivated violence presents a major challenge to both the social and political cohesiveness of South Africa's fragile democracy.

Thus, it is clear that the increased repression of social movements at the hand of the State has caused a severe circumscription of people's socio-economic and political rights as a result of the existing political and socio-economic framework. Instead of disappearing, there will most likely be an intensification of the current conflict between community organisations and the

government. Subsequently, it can be foreseen that the South African democracy will be dramatically reshaped in the next decade.

CHAPTER 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This section is divided into two parts, namely conclusions and recommendations. The first part provides detailed conclusions of the research report regarding neo-liberalism growth path and its negative effects on the South African poor. The second part offers broad and specific recommendations pertaining to both government and social movements. The section also provides policy alternatives as well as general recommendations.

6.1.1 *Neo-liberalism*

There is no doubt that South Africa is following a neo-liberal approach that entrenches the privatisation and commodification of basic municipal services. However, will ‘a better life for all’ be best attained by the pursuit of such an approach?

- There is still a general reluctance in the market-logic to acknowledge the social and cultural value of water but rather to see water only as an economic commodity. Policy alternatives should therefore focus on an approach that acknowledges access to water as a right and not a privilege.
- Service disconnections as a result of arrears on water bills constitute another area that is justified under the cost recovery logic. A key factor that increases the hardship of poor people is the aggressive manner in which cost recovery is enforced. When the poor cannot afford to pay for their services, they are faced with evictions and service disconnections. Many people also cannot afford the reconnection fees charged by the authorities. Although access to water is a right, cost recovery actions present water as a privilege.
- Economic efficiency is usually the one logic employed to inform the market-based approach of cost recovery. As a result, profits and commercial interests are prioritised instead of moral and humanitarian considerations. This becomes particularly crucial when looking at the allocation of service infrastructure. To the detriment of the rural poor, service providers sometimes decide to roll out infrastructure only to urban areas because of their greater ability to pay. The argument is – if you can pay for it, we will deliver it. In real terms, this translates to the fact that poor people are not serviced with water networks because of their inability to pay.

- There is a false belief about the public sector being more corrupt and less efficient than the private sector. The public sector is usually associated with lethargy, bureaucracy and inefficiency while there is a tendency to consider innovation, flexibility and efficiency as being synonymous with private capital. But in the corporate world of water supply, bribery, favouritism and corruption are widespread while accountability, transparency and good governance are undermined because of the insistence by corporate companies that certain water contracts remain secret from the public. If a private service provider becomes unaffordable and inefficient, it becomes very difficult for government to withdraw from the contract because of the high dispute costs and the long-term nature of many of these contracts.
- Users cannot shop around for a better deal with regards to basic service infrastructure and this indicates the existence of a natural monopoly in this area. Monopolies have the tendency to disregard public interest, unless government regulation is strict. Consumers are subjected to price increments. The market-based approach usually employs price increments as the best strategy and as a financial instrument to reach their stated objectives. Although environmental and social objectives can equally be served through such an instrument, the market-based approach has very little interest in that.
- The ability of low-income households to access basic services is also undermined by the market-based approach. Because the rich already have an existing service infrastructure, they end up paying far less for basic services than the poor who must pay for the installation of new ones. Thus, the existing inequalities in South Africa are further worsened by all of these factors.
- Poor people are experiencing all sorts of problems and have been disadvantaged as a result of government's withdrawal from direct service provision. Because the market is not distributing basic services equally to all, the developmental needs of citizens as well as equity considerations are undermined as the private sector becomes less interested in people and their needs than in profits and cost recovery.

6.1.2 Social movements

- The government and the banks have carried out a sustained and vicious attack on the MPAEC irrespective of the high praise accorded to South Africa's Constitution (1996). The MPAEC is however resolute that no arrests, police brutality, or interdict will cause them to back down. Until they can negotiate for the implementation of their demands, they will continue to resist and mobilise.
- South Africa has made inroads with regards to democracy since the days of apartheid. The country boasts of a Constitution (1996) that is widely respected throughout the globe. But the ordeals of the Mandela Park community point to the fact that the local arms of government are not upholding the Constitution. In the light of the ever-increasing antagonism towards the State, these developments predict a negative scenario with regards to South Africa's ability to guarantee the Constitutional Rights of its citizens.
- A vast amount of social movements have developed in South Africa in recent years and the MPAEC is only one of them. The MPAEC was also a proud and outspoken partner of the Anti-Iraq–War Coalition.
- It is clear that the 2009 elections will be won by the ANC. However, the serious shortcomings in the State's delivery programme resulted in a vacuum to the left of the ANC, which has been exposed by social movements.
- It is unlikely that the ANC will be able to please everybody equally, especially with regards to unemployment. It is clear that the government will not solve the problem of unemployment overnight and as a result, crime will continue to manifest prominently in the society. To emphasise the needs of communities on a continuous basis, social movements will have to play an incremental role in terms of mass mobilisation and direct confrontation.
- To be able to effectively address the plight of the oppressed, COSATU may need to launch a mass workers' party and the Union Federation needs to break away from the ANC alliance urgently. The support, already organised in the form of social movements, would be at their immediate disposal if they pursue the breakaway route. But COSATU's reluctance to split from the alliance is well-known; therefore, the vacuum to the left of the ANC will continue to exist.

6.2 Recommendations

The South African political landscape has undergone major alterations since 1994 as a result of the resurfacing of popular civil society movements. The adoption of neo-liberal policies and strategies has led to increasing levels of conflict between social movements and the government. The cohesion of South Africa's fragile democracy is facing a major challenge as a result of the resurfacing of previously experienced socio-political conflict. The antagonism between the government and civil society organisations is unlikely to end soon. Therefore, opportunities for constructive negotiation and dialogue need to be facilitated between the two conflicting parties, in order to alter the landscape on which the contestation is taking place. In view of these observations, this research offers the following recommendations:

6.2.1 The Government:

- The government is enjoined to convene a national conference that will focus on the 'right to dissent or the right to a different perspective' and that will involve all the civil society role players and stakeholders.
- A summit that will focus on the current socio-economic crisis should be convened urgently by the national government in order to open up the socio-economic rights' debate.
- Independent organs of State such as the Human Rights Commission should conduct progressive 'socio economic rights' hearings' throughout the country so that they can evaluate the effects of the state's cost recovery activities on the poor people and its contribution to the current conflict.
- The State should ensure that social movements are included in government structures and ward committees at the local level in an effort to get rid of the present exclusivistic and antagonistic tendencies.
- The state should encourage both Community Development Forums and Community Police Forums to consolidate strategies around socio-economic dictates and to minimise conflict. In cases where large numbers of people are involved, protest can be effectively managed by developing guidelines that will help the police to minimise conflict.

- There is a need for policies that will focus on non-violent punitive measures, the resolution of conflict, and the use of weapons to guide municipal officials involved in cost recovery operations.
- Beyond issues pertaining to the governance of political and socio-economic rights, officials involved with criminal justice such as State lawyers, State prosecutors, the police, magistrates, etc, should be subjected to specific training programmes aimed at equipping them with the relevant skills for socio-economic legislation.
- The constitutionality of involving the private sector in evictions and cost recovery operations should be probed through the establishment of an investigative commission.

6.2.2 Social Movements and/ or Community Organisations:

- The formation of a ‘coalition of social movements’ to oversee the protection of political and socio-economic rights should be actively pursued by those involved in the socio- economic rights’ debate. Such a coalition would have to monitor the extent to which people’s rights are upheld and respected during conflict and protest. This would require that social movements train and deploy ‘rights’ monitors’ in volatile communities.
- In addition, social movements should attempt to access current government initiatives that enhance the development of communities such as the Community Development Agency. Most social movements still need to find suitable approaches to access government resources because they are still largely dependent on international funding or funding from their membership.
- Room should be made for social movements to engage one another in dialogue at a national level with a view to expanding and deepening their strategies. This would result in positive spin-offs such as increased community cohesion and alternative policy development.
- Community projects aimed at promoting income generation should be further developed since they contribute towards poverty alleviation, alternative survival strategies and community cohesion. Such projects should include community vegetable gardens, ‘Umgalelo’ (community savings clubs), women-in-textile clubs etc.

- Social movements should attempt to raise the basic life skills and literacy levels of ordinary members by means of enrolling them at night schools in their areas. Specific attention should be devoted to the empowerment of women since they are often worse off because of their vulnerability to poverty and patriarchy.
- The knowledge base of activists on global and domestic macro-economic dictates should be drastically expanded and broadened through political schools or workshops.
- Social movements should develop and educate their membership to partake in opportunities for policy formulation at all government levels. Social movements currently choose to react to policy only when it negatively impacts on the lives of citizens and are simply not trying to influence the policy formulation process in a principled manner.
- Communities should be informed about the formalised structures for public participation and active engagement such as the police forums, development forums and ward committees. Social movements should participate, empower and democratise these structures through the development of active engagement strategies.

6.2.3 Policy Alternatives

Policy alternatives regarding basic services should be informed by the following:

- The ANC's GEAR strategy should admit responsibility for the country's poor performance in the area of basic service delivery to the poor. It is unethical that water be sold to get profits at a time when thousands of black poor are unable to sustain life because of the direct consequence of non-access to services.
- The provision of basic services must not ensure the profitability of the private sector, but ensure the sustenance of human life. It is very much apartheid-like to sacrifice majority interests in order to ensure the profitability of a minority. When deciding on basic services, private sector profitability should take second place to developmental thinking.
- The costs of making basic services available to everyone are by far outnumbered by the socio-economic gains to the entire country. But the

country's current implementation of basic services amounts to the further entrenchment of separate development only.

- Ensuring the right to basic services is an important objective that the government will have to achieve in order to fulfil its promise of 'a better life for all'. Policy formulation is executed on a politicised landscape and it would therefore be sensible that pressure of a political nature be exerted on the State to influence this.
- The promotion and protection of socio-economic rights is a core function of the State. Profit thinking can never drive basic services' considerations and should thus come second after majority interests.
- The equitable distribution of basic services is also another important State function since the current poor service levels pose serious health hazards. The State should monitor and regulate the service level agreements that it has with private service providers and should specify clear deliverables and goals to ensure service provision to all households.
- Policy alternatives should also look at local and international Public-Public Partnerships which allows for collaboration between different State departments within a specific country or between State departments across borders.
- In England, service disconnections have been outlawed and South Africa could also follow a similar model. Because the South African Constitution acknowledges the right to water, the imposition of service cut-offs and repossession of property for arrears on water bills cannot be constitutional and should be stopped immediately.
- To ensure the sustainability of water utilisation in South Africa, the people, especially women, will have to be involved in the management of water services. The management of water services would have to be decentralised for water to be managed locally. This could be successfully done by the formation of co-operatives, water-committees as well as water-utilisation associations.

6.2.4 General

- The ANC has been reluctant to consider the provision a basic social safety net, such as a basic income grant for those left hopeless as the government liberalises the economy. As government embarks on its radical reforms, the

poor are the worst affected and the ones who need to buy most into the reforms.

- The current welfare system covers no one between the ages of fourteen and sixty-five though there are plans to reduce the poverty rate only by 25 per cent. Trevor Manuel, the Minister of Finance, states that the country cannot afford to finance a culture of dependency or entitlement, to which Archbishop Desmond Tutu responds that one can hardly speak of entitlement when a minority becomes disproportionately rich through black economic empowerment.
- The government needs to urgently provide interim social security for those waiting for the benefits of the economic growth to ‘trickle down’ to them. Even if the robust economic growth finally arrives, it is unlikely to significantly narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. If government does not provide a social safety net, its market orientated reforms will run up against a wall of dissatisfaction.
- The government’s current premise is that growth must be achieved before redistribution is misdirected but the two should be pursued in tandem. Government’s anti-poverty programmes remain disjointed and uncoordinated and this has to change.
- It is clear that the country will be unable to deal with poverty and unemployment overnight. According to some estimates, 45 percent of the population lives in poverty.
- Even if the South African economy reaches the six percent growth rate and the spurt of investment needed, there will remain the issue of the large unemployed sector with no or inadequate skills for a modern economy.
- So far, the economic costs of South Africa’s transition have fallen disproportionately on those it was supposed to benefit most – the millions of black poor. Clearly, even if growth and investment rise rapidly, it is unlikely to ‘trickle down’ to them immediately. What is urgently needed is a welfare net to soften the blow, coupled with an elaborate re-skilling programme that begins with basic literacy and public works, and the transfer of land and skills in the rural areas.

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